NATO's Enlargement to the East: An Analysis of Collective Decision-making

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1 Introduction

At NATO's Madrid summit of July 1997, at which the alliance decided to invite the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland to become members, Czech deputy minister of foreign affairs Vondra approached a group of U.S. senators participating at the summit on behalf of the Senate NATO Observer Group and asked them, "Why did you choose us?" The answer he got was, "We like you, we think you like us, and then you talked it into our heads for so long that we could not do otherwise." (Interview Member of CEEC Delegation to NATO)

This little anecdote could serve as an epigraph for the analysis of the collective decision-making process on NATO's Eastern enlargement which is the subject of this report. I argue, first, that the question "Why did you choose us?" is a serious one, and difficult to answer in the perspective of traditional, system-level and rationalist alliance theories. Whereas NATO members could not expect security or other material benefits from enlargement --- NATO is not in need of new allies for security reasons and the admission of central and eastern European countries (CEECs) does not increase NATO's power ---, they risked to incur substantial costs by extending their security guarantees to an unstable region and by antagonizing Russia, still a powerful state and an indispensable partner for arms control and other issues of security cooperation.

Second, I suggest that the first part of the answer --- "We like you, we think you like us" --- indicates that the community of liberal values and norms which developed between NATO and the reform-minded central and eastern European countries (CEECs) provided the structural precondition for NATO's decision to admit those CEECs that had made the greatest progress in liberal democratic transformation. This intersubjective structure of value-based mutual liking, however, was only a necessary background condition but did not, by itself, bring about enlargement. In other words, the causal nexus between structure and outcome was neither trivial nor unproblematic, the community of values did not automatically produce either the CEECs' desire to accede to NATO or NATO's readiness to admit CEE members. Rather, the CEECs' bid to join the Western alliance resulted from a reassessment of their security interests in the face of instability in the east European region and the weakness of alternative security organizations. Moreover, NATO did not favor or prepare for enlargement on its own initiative, and when it was faced with the CEECs' demands for membership, the member states were divided on the issue and reluctant to embark upon this project.

Finally, then, my analysis seeks to show that there was indeed a lot of "talking" involved in order to persuade reluctant Western decision-makers. I argue that the argumentation in NATO's decision-making process is best characterized as "rhetorical action", the strategic use

of norm-based arguments. CEE policy-makers appealed to the collective identity of the Euro-Atlantic community of states and its constitutive liberal norms in order to advance their security interests in NATO membership. The Western proponents of enlargement, partly persuaded by these arguments and partly pursuing the enlargement project for reasons of domestic politics, also referred to common liberal values and to NATO's traditional mission of promoting democracy, multilateralism, and peace in Europe in order to justify NATO expansion and the selection of new members. By appealing to the constitutive values and norms of NATO and by framing opposition to enlargement as inconsistent with NATO's organizational mission and past promises, these actors put social pressure on the more reluctant NATO members and domestic groups. Although they did not change their individual preferences about the desirability of enlargement, they could not openly oppose this policy for reasons of credibility.

Although rhetorical action is a persistent feature of NATO's collective decision-making process on enlargement, it cannot alone account for its outcome. First, although the early Western proponents were susceptible to the arguments of the CEE policy-makers, they mainly embarked upon NATO enlargement out of domestic political considerations. Second, rhetorical action did not prove sufficient to persuade the opponents of enlargement either in the U.S. bureaucracy or among the allies. Third, then, although it was difficult for the enlargement skeptics within the alliance to oppose a project that was in line with and justified by NATO's constitutive values and norms, NATO decision-making was mainly driven by U.S. initiatives, leadership, and ultimately U.S. bargaining power within NATO.

The paper is organized as follows. At the outset, I will show that the collective outcome of NATO enlargement is difficult to explain on the basis of system-level, rationalist alliance theory which starts from the assumption of states instrumentally pursuing their egoistic security and power interests in the international system. By contrast, a sociological institutionalist theory, which conceives international organizations as agencies of international communities of values and norms, accounts for enlargement in general, and the selection of candidates in particular: NATO admitted states that have come to share the collective identity, the values and norms of the liberal, Euro-Atlantic community it represents. Moreover, NATO selected those CEECs for the first round that had made most progress on the path of liberal democratic transformation.

I then turn to the analysis of the decision-making process which brought about this collective outcome. The question here is: *How* did the alliance values and norms affect the behavior and the interaction of the relevant actors? I put forward five hypotheses based on

different modes and logics of action: habitual, normative, communicative, rhetorical, and strategic action. The empirical core of the paper consists of nine "analytical episodes" from the history of the decision-making process in which I will assess the explanatory power of these hypotheses: (1) the emergence of the CEE interest in joining NATO, (2) NATO's initial rejection of the CEECs' demands, (3) the CEECs' strategy to overcome NATO's opposition toward enlargement, (4) the change of positions in two member states, Germany and the United States, (5) the divergence of interests in NATO, (6) the decision-making process in NATO, (7) the negotiating process between NATO and the CEECs, (8) the U.S. ratification process, and (9) the process after the first round of enlargement and the prospects for a second round.

The study is based on the analysis of NATO documents, media publications, and interviews I have collected and conducted during my NATO fellowship for the 1998-2000 period. Meanwhile, the first books and articles on the NATO enlargement process have appeared and provided a valuable additional source for my analysis.[1] I do not intend (and would not be able) to match these publications in historical richness and detail. It is my aim to present a theoretical perspective and a causal story that will hopefully help us to better understand both the conditions and dynamics of NATO enlargement and the ways in which values and norms affect the politics of Western international organizations.

2 The Outcome of NATO Enlargement: A Puzzle for Rationalist Alliance Theory and Its Sociological Institutionalist Solution

In this chapter, I will argue that, whereas rationalist approaches to the study of international institutions cannot explain convincingly why NATO expanded to Central and Eastern Europe at all, a sociological institutionalist approach not only provides a plausible account of the basic rationale for NATO enlargement but is also corroborated, to a very large extent, by the selection of CEE candidates for the first round of enlargement.[2]

2.1 Rationalist Institutionalism and the Expansion of International Organizations

Rationalist theories of international institutions share the premises of individualism, egoism, instrumentalism, and materialism: They start with the individual actors, their corporate identities, interests, and preferences. They assume that states act egoistically and choose the behavioral option which promises to maximize their own welfare, or at least satisfy their

[1] See Goldgeier 1999; Grayson 1999; Weisser 1999.

[2] This section is based on Schimmelfennig 1999.

selfish goals, under the given circumstances. Finally, rationalist institutionalism conceptualizes the international system as an anarchical and technical environment of state action characterized by the absence of hierarchical authority and by the predominance of material structures like the distribution of power and wealth. Material conditions are the most important explanatory factors for the interests, processes and outcomes in international relations. These premises also characterize the rationalist analysis of international organizations and their enlargement: International organizations are instrumental associations designed to enhance efficiency. They help states to increase their utilities by reducing problems and costs of collective action. Correspondingly, decisions on membership in international organizations are based upon egoistic cost-benefit calculations and criteria of instrumental rationality.

The basic rational-choice approach to the issues of membership and size of organizations is club theory. A club is defined as a voluntary group deriving mutual benefit from sharing a good characterized by excludable and partially divisible benefits (Cornes/Sandler 1986: 24-25). This definition is held to suit most international organizations. NATO mainly provides (predominantly nuclear) deterrence and defense. Both goods are excludable in the sense that they can be withheld costlessly from non-members, but while nuclear deterrence is basically indivisible, the provision of conventional forces and weapons for defense may create rivalry and divisible benefits. Whereas extended nuclear deterrence protects all alliance members simultaneously, conventional forces used to defend one alliance member cannot be used to defend another ally at the same time. Moreover, conventional forces can be used for ally-specific purposes, e.g. in domestic conflicts.[3]

If an international organization provides divisible goods, membership becomes a problem because additional members are rival consumers. Enlargement can lead to crowding, that is members cannot use the good as much or as often as before. New alliance members may create additional demand for military support and additional entrapment risks for the old members. International organizations, then, only expand if the costs of crowding are matched by equivalent contributions of the new members. This applies to all members individually. For a club-type organization to expand, each member state must expect positive net benefits from expansion. Moreover, these benefits must exceed the benefits of any other possible relationship (short of membership) with the applicant state.

Finally, rationalist institutionalism assumes that, ceteris paribus, "small is beautiful." Generally, the larger the size of an international organization, the smaller the "marginal policy

contribution" of an additional member, the higher the diffusion of gains from cooperation, the higher the likelihood of free riding, and the higher the management costs as well as the costs of finding agreement (Fratianni/Pattison 1982: 252; Olson 1971: 35; Russett 1968: 286). In a club-theoretical perspective, then, the marginal benefits accruing to the members states have to be considerably higher than the marginal costs of crowding. They would have to balance the disproportionally increasing costs of organization, decisions, and compliance as well.

2.2 Rationalist Institiutionalism and NATO Enlargement: the Puzzle

Snyder gives an apt and concise account of the cost-benefit calculations that enter into alliance choices (1990: 110; see also Snyder 1997: 43-45):

"Security benefits in a mutual defence alliance include chiefly a reduced probability of being attacked (deterrence), greater strength in case of attack (defense) and prevention of the ally's alliance with one's adversary (preclusion). The principal costs are the increased risks of war and reduced freedom of action that are entailed in the commitment to the partner. The size of these benefits and costs for both parties will be determined largely by three general factors in their security situations: (1) their alliance 'need', (2) the extent to which the prospective partner meets that need, and (3) the actual terms of the alliance contract."

Rationalist hypotheses differ mainly with regard to the main determinant of alliance need:

Defensive Positionalism. The motivational logic of defensive positionalism is typical for the neorealist analysis of international politics. Neorealism starts from the assumption that the international system is an anarchical self-help system in which states must be primarily concerned with their security if they want to survive as autonomous actors (Waltz 1979). Therefore states are sensitive to changes in the international distribution of power. They worry about relative gains of other states and seek to defend their position in the international power structure (Grieco 1988). In principle, states prefer not to align because alliances reduce their freedom of action and entail the risks of entrapment as well as of long-term losses in autonomy and relative power. Alliances are only formed out of necessity, that is if states are unable to maintain their security and defend their position in the international power structure on their own. We can thus hypothesize that NATO will expand only if enlargement is a necessary and efficient means for the member states to balance superior power or perceived threats.[4]

From a defensive positionalist viewpoint, NATO enlargement is puzzling because, as a result of the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union, the Russian threat has so

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[3] See the joint-product model of alliances applied to NATO in Sandler/Hartley 1999: 34-35.

[4] See Waltz 1979: 126-127 for key propositions of balance-of-power theory, and Walt 1987 for balance-of-threat theory.

strongly diminished and the position of NATO in the international power structure has so vastly improved that enlargement is unnecessary as a balancing strategy. In this perspective, preclusion would be the only plausible reason for NATO enlargement: Russia's relative weakness provides a unique opportunity to expand NATO eastwards. If in the future Russia regained strength and returned to its traditional policy towards Central and Eastern Europe, an enlarged NATO would be able to deny Russia the restoration of the former Soviet hegemonic sphere. Even this explanation, however, is not satisfactory. First, as Walt claims, expansion may cause the disease it pretends to cure (1997: 173). It fuels Russian suspicions and may thus provoke a threat in the future where there is none at present. More importantly, the timing and scope of enlargement do not fit the preclusion hypothesis. If the window of opportunity had really been so small that immediate action was required, NATO should either have completed enlargement in a single round or should have focused on Ukraine and the Baltic countries, because these countries border on Russia and are the main objects of Russian revisionism. Instead, the first wave of expansion included countries that could still have joined after a potential manifestation of Russian expansionism in the former Soviet republics.

Offensive Positionalism. Offensive positionalism is a characteristic motivational assumption in other realist accounts of international politics. According to Schweller (1994), defensive positionalism only applies to status quo-powers, whereas revisionist powers seek not only to defend but to enhance their position in the international power structure. Others (Mearsheimer 1995: 11-12; Zakaria 1995: 479, fn. 43) assume that *all* states will seek to maximize their power because this is the only rational strategy in a highly competitive anarchical environment. Thus, NATO will expand if enlargement is an efficient means for the member states to increase their power in the international system.

Schweller's conditional hypothesis about offensive positionalism does not apply because NATO is a club of status quo powers, even more so after the Soviet bloc ceased to exist and NATO's position in the Euro-Atlantic region has become unchallenged. As for the general assumption of offensive positionalism, there is reason to doubt that Eastern enlargement increases NATO's power. It certainly increases NATO territory and population. The CEECs, however, are poor by comparison with the old members, their economic, technological, and military capabilities are far below NATO standards. Even if one conceded that enlargement brought about an increase in NATO's resources, the selection of new members would still be puzzling. If power maximization was the goal, NATO should have admitted as many CEECs as possible instead of turning down the requests of the majority of candidates for the time

being, including those of the wealthiest CEEC (Slovenia) and one of the biggest and most populated countries of the region (Romania).

Absolute Gains-Seeking. Neoliberal institutionalist theory assumes that states do not need to worry about other states' gains in power because, in an international system characterized by increasing complex interdependence (Keohane/Nye 1977), military power is losing its effectiveness and fungibility as a means to achieve state objectives, and survival ceases to be the primary concern of states. Therefore, states are able to focus on their own, absolute gains from international cooperation. Consequently, NATO will expand if enlargement is an efficient means for the member states to increase their benefits from the alliance.

Besides management and decision costs, NATO incurs both financial costs in order to finance enlargement and to support the new members as well as crowding costs. According to the most moderate NATO estimate, NATO members will have to spend below US-$ 2 billion because NATO decided that, for the most part, the new members would have to bear the costs of force modernization themselves and that allied forces would not be permanently stationed in the new member countries. Crowding effects are to be expected from spatial rivalry and entrapment risks. As far as spatial rivalry is concerned, the inclusion of the Czech Republic and, above all, Poland, lengthens the "Eastern front" of NATO. Hungary does not even share a single border with any other NATO country. Entrapment risks, that is the probability of a higher than average consumption of the club good, result from expansion into a politically unstable region and towards Russia, which is not only the most powerful country outside of NATO but also opposed to NATO enlargement. Hungary borders on Croatia and Serbia, Poland on Russia and Belarus.

Although these costs are not prohibitive at the moment, it is highly unlikely that they are balanced by higher than average contributions of the new members. This is mainly because their GNP per capita is at the low end of NATO members. As a consequence, the joint contribution of the three new members to the military budget of NATO will amount to no more than approximately 4.5 percent. Furthermore, their armed forces are in a comparatively poor state with backward military technologies and a still low degree of compatibility with NATO.

In sum, then, the main rationalist approaches to the analysis of international organizations and alliances do not convincingly account for NATO enlargement. It is, therefore, not surprising that scholars starting from rationalist premises arrived at the conclusion that Partnership for Peace was "preferable to expanding NATO" (Walt 1997: 179, fn. 55) and constituted the more "efficient institutional solution" (Bernauer 1995: 186-187) for NATO-

CEE relations. Partnership for Peace allows NATO to cooperate with the CEECs on security problems and draw on their military resources for peacekeeping missions without the binding commitments of an alliance and without risking tensions with Russia.

2.3 Sociological Institutionalism and the Expansion of International Organizations

Sociological theories of international institutions reject the basic metatheoretical and theoretical premises of rationalism. They share a structuralist ontology according to which social phenomena "cannot be reduced to aggregations or consequences of individual attributes or motives" (DiMaggio/Powell 1991: 8). Rather, the actors, their interests, and preferences must be endogenized, that is analyzed and explained as the products of social structures (culture, institutions) and social interaction. Sociological institutionalists regard the international system as an "institutional" or "cultural" environment structured by intersubjective cognitions and norms (Scott 1991: 167; Jepperson/Wendt/Katzenstein 1996: 33-34). Correspondingly, sociological institutionalists reject the assumption that states generally act egoistically and instrumentally. By contrast, they claim that the actors are committed, in their decisions, to values and norms and follow a "logic of appropriateness" (March/Olsen 1989: 160-162).

On the basis of these assumptions, sociological institutionalism posits that the origins and the constitution as well as the goals and procedures of international organizations are more strongly determined by the standards of legitimacy and appropriateness of the international community to which they belong than by the utilitarian demand for efficient problem-solving (Katzenstein 1997: 12; Reus-Smit 1997: 569; Weber 1994: 4-5, 32). International organizations represent and help to build international communities of values and norms whose "definitions, rules, and principles are encoded in the prescriptions" they elaborate "for nation-state practice". Moreover, they are able "to impose definitions of member characteristics and purposes upon the governments of [their] member states" (McNeely 1995: 27, 33). States that share the fundamental values of an international community and adhere to its basic norms are regarded as legitimate members of the community and are entitled to join the community organizations. Consequently, we can expect NATO to admit all countries that share its collective identity and values and adhere to its constitutive norms. The faster a country adopts the community values and norms, the earlier it becomes a member.

In a sociological perspective, NATO is therefore best understood not as simply a military alliance but as the military organization of an international community of values and norms. NATO is embedded in the Euro-Atlantic or "Western" community. This community is most

fundamentally based on the liberal values and norms shared by its members. Liberal human rights, i.e. individual freedoms, civil liberties, and political rights are at the center of the community's collective identity. The liberal principles of social order - pluralism, the rule of law, democratic political participation and representation as well as private property and the market economy - are derived from, and justified by, these rights. They are the "constitutive values that define legitimate statehood and rightful state action" in the domestic and international realm (Reus-Smit 1997: 558). In the preamble to the North Atlantic Treaty, the signatory states declare the protection of their values, rather than just the preservation of national autonomy or the balance of power, as the basic purpose of NATO: "They are determined to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilisation of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law."

In the international realm, liberal values and norms are expressed in the institutions of peaceful conflict management and multilateralism. The "democratic peace" has its roots in the domestic norms of liberal democratic states. These norms demand that political conflicts be managed and resolved without violence and on the basis of constitutional procedures. When democratic states deal with each other, they know that all actors are committed to these common values and norms. This knowledge enables them to develop mutual trust, dependable expectations of peaceful behavior (Owen 1994; Russett et al. 1995: 31-32; Risse-Kappen 1995a). Article 2 of the North Atlantic Treaty takes up the liberal theory of peace by positing that the "Parties will contribute toward the further development of peaceful and friendly international relations by strengthening their free institutions, by bringing about a better understanding of the principles upon which these institutions are founded, and by promoting conditions of stability and well-being".

Multilateralism is defined as a generic institutional form that "coordinates relations among three or more states on the basis of generalized principles of conduct". These "generalized organizing principles logically entail an indivisibility among the members of a collectivity with respect to the behavior in question" and generate "expectations of 'diffuse reciprocity'" (Ruggie 1993: 11). They correspond to the basic liberal idea of procedural justice, i.e. "the legislative codification of formal, reciprocally binding rules" among the members of society (Reus-Smit 1997: 577). According to Weber, these principles govern the praxis of NATO in the following way: "Within NATO, security was indivisible. It was based on a general organizing principle, that the external boundaries of alliance territory were completely inviolable and that an attack on any border was an attack on all. Diffuse reciprocity was the norm." (Weber 1993: 233).

The sociological institutionalist expectation about NATO enlargement can thus be summed up as follows: NATO will be ready to admit all European states that reliably share its liberal norms of domestic and international conduct. The earlier and more thoroughly they adopt these norms, the earlier they will become NATO members.

2.4 Sociological Institutionalism and NATO Enlargement: the Solution to the Puzzle

The sociological perspective on NATO described in the previous section can solve the puzzle Eastern enlargement creates for rationalist alliance theories. To begin with, the general principles of NATO membership were reaffirmed in the NATO documents that paved the way for Eastern enlargement. Already the 1994 Partnership for Peace Framework Document (§2) pointed to the liberal value basis of the entire process:

"Protection and promotion of fundamental freedoms and human rights, and safeguarding of freedom, justice, and peace through democracy are shared values fundamental to the Partnership. In joining the Partnership, the member states of the North Atlantic Alliance and the other States subscribing to this Document recall that they are committed to the preservation of democratic societies, their freedom from coercion and intimidation, and the maintenance of the principles of international law."

Chapter 1 (§2) of the 1995 Study on NATO Enlargement reads:

'The benefits of common defence and [...] integration are important to protecting the further democratic development of the new members. By integrating more countries into the existing community of values and institutions [...] NATO enlargement will safeguard the freedom and security of all its members."

The same documents suggest that political conditions pertaining to shared values and alliance norms are the primary and indispensable prerequisites for membership. As U.S. President Clinton plainly stated in 1997: "Countries with repressive political systems, countries with designs on their neighbors, countries with militaries unchecked by civilian control, or with closed economic systems need not apply."[5] Also, Secretary of State Albright made it clear that liberal values and norms are not only a necessary but also a sufficient condition of membership, since "no European democracy will be excluded because of where it sits on the map".[6]

The sociological institutionalist hypothesis not only provides a general rationale for NATO expansion in the absence of material (security or military) incentives. It also accounts plausibly for the selection of new members for the first round of enlargement. According to this hypothesis, NATO chose the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland because these three

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[5] Cited in http://www.nato.int/usa/info/enlargement.htm, last visited 17 May 2000.

[6] Speech at the North Atlantic Council Ministerial Meeting in Sintra, 29 May 1997, cited in http://www.nato.int/usa/state/s970529a.htm, last visited 17 May 2000.

countries were more advanced than other CEE countries in the adoption of Western values and norms. They are, indeed, the forerunners and paragons of liberalization and democratization in the region. Already under Soviet domination, popular movements in Hungary (1956), Czechoslovakia (1968), and Poland (1956, 1970, 1981) revolted against the Communist system. In 1989, they led the way in the democratic transformation of the region, with Poland inventing the "round table" of peaceful transition and Hungary opening the "iron curtain" for GDR refugees.

Table 1: Freedom House data on CEECs[7]

Country	Political Rights	Civil Liberties	Time	Democracy	Economy
Czech Republic	1	2	7/4	1.38	1.88
Hungary	1	2	7/4	1.44	1.63
Poland	1	2	7/2	1.44	2.00
Bulgaria	2	3	6/-	3.81	5.38
Estonia	1	2	4/1	2.06	2.13
Latvia	2	2	3/-	2.06	2.50
Lithuania	1	2	6/2	2.06	2.50
Romania	2	3	1/-	3.88	4.63
Slovakia	2	4	-/-	3.81	3.38
Slovenia	1	2	6/4	1.88	2.38

Arguably, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland not only matched the standard NATO members but also distinguished themselves from the other CEE candidates with regard to the internalization of liberal values and norms when NATO made its decision on the invitation of new members. This can be shown by Freedom House data for the 1996/1997 period (Table 1).

First, the ratings of 1 for political rights and 2 for civil liberties correspond to the standard ratings for the old NATO members.[8] Second, the invited members have been classified as "free" countries for a longer time than the other CEECs and scored higher in their ratings for the liberal transformation of their political and economic systems. Moreover, none of the three

[7] Freedom House ratings are from 1 (best) to 7 (worst). The first figure in the column "Time" is the number of years a country has continously been classified as a "free" country"; the second figure stands for the number of years that the country has had a rating of 1 for political rights and of 2 or better for civil liberties. The "democracy" and "economy" ratings are specific to the Freedom House's "Nations in Transit" reports. See Karatnycky/Motyl/Shor 1997.

[8] Greece scored 3 for civil liberties. Turkey is the obvious outlier because it was only classified as a "partly free" country in 1996/1997. All other NATO members were rated 1 for political rights and 1 or 2 for civil liberties.

central European countries has been engaged in major territorial and ethnic conflict with its neighbors or domestically. All of them have shown the willingness and capability to manage such conflicts by peaceful and institutional means. Poland granted minority rights to its German-speaking population early on and made no claims on Lithuania, Belarusian, and Ukrainian territory that had belonged to its pre-war area. The Czech Republic used no force or pressure against Slovak separatism but agreed to a peaceful dissolution of Czechoslovakia. The Hungarian government stayed away from irredentism despite sizable Hungarian minorities abroad. In the face of considerable domestic opposition and repressive policies against the Hungarian minorities in Slovakia and Romania, it has actively and successfully pursued the conclusion of basic treaties with both neighboring countries.

Thus, if only three countries were to be invited, the sociological institutionalist hypothesis would have predicted the actual choice. Yet, nothing in this hypothesis predicts that NATO should limit its initial round of enlargement to three countries in the first place. Whereas one could make a plausible argument for why Romania, one of the countries which were proposed for inclusion in the first round by some member states, did not meet the standards of the community in 1997, at least the exclusion of Slovenia cannot be justified on the basis of an insufficient or too recent adoption of Western values and norms.

In sum, the sociological institutionalist hypothesis about the enlargement of international organizations provides a satisfactory first cut at NATO enlargement. In contrast to rationalist approaches, it not only gives a plausible account of why NATO admitted CEECs as full members at all, but it also explains, to a very large extent, which of them NATO selected for membership. To be sure, the fact that NATO only selected consolidated democracies for membership in no way contradicts rationalist expectations. In order to limit heterogeneity and transaction costs and in order to minimize the risk of being drawn into costly military conflicts by new members, an alliance of democratic countries will be most likely to choose other democratic countries which it considers both similar in structure and peaceful in behavior. In the rationalist perspective, however, the congruence of alliance and member state basic preferences will only be a necessary but not a sufficient condition of enlargement. In the absence of net security or power benefits for the alliance, joint democracy alone will not motivate the alliance members to expand their alliance.

There a good methodological reasons not to stop with this correlational macro-explanation. On the one hand, correlations can be treacherous indicators of causal relationships. The covariance of liberal democratic transformation and NATO membership may be coincidental or spurious, that is the real driving forces of NATO enlargement may be

others than international community. It is even possible that egoistic and instrumental action produced the (collectively inefficient) enlargement outcome, e.g. as a result of domestic politics or bargaining power effects. On the other hand, a purely macrotheoretical explanation is less than satisfactory because it neglects the agency and process side of how collective outcomes are produced. It leaves aside how structural conditions are transformed into individual action and how individual actions are aggregated to collective outcomes. In the main chapters of this study, I will therefore analyze the collective decision-making process that intervenes between structure and outcome. Doing so will not only give us a more complete account of how enlargement came about. It would also allow us to regard the sociological institutionalist explanation as more justified --- if the observable process corresponded to sociological expectations.

3 Process Hypotheses

In this chapter, I will develop five process hypotheses about how the decision to expand NATO came about: habitual action, normative action, communicative action, rhetorical action, and strategic action. The hypotheses draw on different logics of action and process and adduce different conditions under which the enlargement outcome was produced. For all these hypotheses, I will specify observable implications to be confronted with the history of the enlargement process. These observable implications refer to (1) the CEECs' enlargement preferences, (2) NATO members' enlargement preferences, (3) the quality of the decision-making process within NATO and (4) the negotiating process between NATO and the CEECs, (5) the conditions that produced the enlargement outcome, and (6) the post-enlargement process. The process hypotheses will be presented in the order of diminishing strength or depth of social and institutional impact on the actors (see Table 2).

Table 2: Institutional and Social Effects in Different Types of Action

	Institutional and social effects on ...			
Type of action	**Cognition**	**Reflection**	**Behavior**	**Outcome**
Habitual	X	X	X	X
Normative	---	X	X	X
Communicative	---	---	X	X
Rhetorical	---	---	---	X
Strategic	---	---	---	---

Whereas the hypothesis of habitual action postulates that institutions impact on the actors before they even begin to think about their preferences and the situation, the hypothesis of normative action assumes that institutional effects become important as the actors reflect on the situation and their obligations. In communicative action, institutional or social effects come in at the level of argumentative behavior, whereas rhetorical action sees this behavior as determined by instrumental choices. Rhetorical action, however, assumes that social ideas and institutions affect the outcome of the interaction process. By contrast, the hypothesis of strategic action states that material factors and instrumental behavior characterize the process "all the way down".

3.1 Habitual Action

The habitual action hypothesis is based on a cognitive mechanism of institutional impact. This cognitive mechanism has been developed most explicitly in neo-insitutionalist approaches to organizational theory (see, e.g., DiMaggio/Powell 1991). According to this hypothesis, institutions shape individual behavior "by providing the cognitive scripts, categories and models that are indispensable for action, not least because without them the world and the behaviour of others cannot be interpreted" (Hall/Taylor 1996: 947). Individual actors conform with institutionally prescribed behavior out of habit: "For cognitive theorists, compliance occurs [...] because other types of behavior are inconceivable; routines are followed because they are taken for granted as 'the way we do things'." (Scott 1995: 44) The logic of habitual action has the following implications for the process of NATO enlargement:

(1) The CEECs' desire to become NATO members was an automatic, taken-for-granted response to the post-cold war situation.

(2) The enlargement preferences of the NATO members were uniform and determined by the enlargement rules of the organization. NATO offered membership, or reacted favorably to the membership requests of democratic CEECs.

(3) The decision-making process within NATO was characterized by little conflict about the timing of enlargement and the selection of new members as well as by the bureaucratic execution of organizational scripts.

(4) The negotiating process between NATO and the CEECs was also dominated by low-visibility organizational routines for dealing with applicants and characterized by the mimetic adoption of NATO models and rules on the part of the CEECs.

(5) Enlargement depended on the existence of organizational rules and routines of NATO and its ability to provide a set of cognitive scripts, categories, and models towards which the new and transforming states of the CEE region could orient themselves.

(6) Further enlargement rounds are a matter of routine. They follow the habitualized institutional paths of the first enlargement round.

3.2 Normative Action

In contrast with the habitual action hypothesis, the concept of normative action is often associated with the "old institutionalism" exemplified by Max Weber and Talcott Parsons. Normative action is more reflective and purposive than habitual action. Conscious moral commitment rather than taken-for-granted rules and routines drive the behavior of the actors. Socialization is the primary mechanism through which intersubjective structures are transformed into individual preferences and action. As a result of successful socialization, the values and norms that constitute the social fabric of a community or society are internalized by its members, i.e. adopted into their own repertoire of cognitions and behaviors. As a result of internalization, the individuals identify themselves with their community and commit themselves to its values and norms.[9] Alternatively, we may say that individual actors become socialized into institutionally defined roles, learn the norms and rules associated with these roles, and act appropriately by "fulfilling the obligations of a role in a situation".[10] These are the implications of normative action for the process of NATO enlargement:

(1) The CEECs' desire to become NATO members was a corrolary of their identification with the Euro-Atlantic international community and its constitutive values and norms. The CEECs sought NATO membership to the extent that they adhered to liberal norms of domestic and international conduct.

(2) The enlargement preferences of the NATO members were uniform and determined by the liberal norms of the organization and the collective liberal identity with the CEECs. NATO offered membership or reacted favorably to the membership requests of democratic CEECs.

(3) The decision-making process within NATO was characterized by little conflict about the timing of enlargement and the selection of new members as well as by a firm commitment to, and value-based deliberations on, the admission of consolidated liberal democracies in the CEE region.

(4) The negotiating process between NATO and the CEECs was characterized by a norm-based "grand design" for their integration into the Euro-Atlantic Community and a teaching and learning process in which the CEECs were taught, and learned, the norms and procedures of the alliance before being admitted to NATO.

(5) Enlargement depended on the commitment of NATO to its community-building functions and on the CEECs' progressive internalization of the community's constitutive liberal norms.

(6) Further enlargement rounds are a matter of continued socialization. New members will be admitted when they have sufficiently internalized the liberal community norms.

3.3 Communicative Action

The concept of communicative action was developed by Habermas (1981) and has been applied to problems of international relations by Müller (1994) and Risse (2000). In contrast

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[9] See, for instance, Parsons 1969: 440-456 or Weber's concept of "value-rationality" (1968: 25).

[10] March and Olsen 1989: 160-161.

to habitual and normative action, both forms of rule-guided behavior, communicative action assumes a situation in which institutional rules and norms are missing, unclear, or contested. In such a situation, communicative action involves a cooperative, discursive process of truth-seeking in which the participants challenge and debate the validity claims inherent in their standpoints and statements "with the aim of reaching a mutual understanding based on a reasoned consensus" (Risse 2000: 1-2). In this argumentative process, the actors "are not primarily oriented toward their own success" but "open to being persuaded by the better argument" (Risse 2000: 9, 7). The process of communicative action does not start with internalized institutional cognitions or norms (as do the processes of habitual and normative action) but is agnostic on the substance and the sources of the initial desires and interests of the actors. At the end of the day, however, it is thought have constitutive effects, that is lead to new, collective identities and understandings and a change in the values and interests of the participants. An enlargement process characterized by communicative action would therefore have the following characteristics:

(1) The CEECs' goal to become NATO members was not necessarily consensually shared, and possibly even contested, among the states of the region.
(2) Likewise, the enlargement preferences of the NATO members and/or the organizational enlargement rules and norms of NATO were unclear, ambiguous, different, or even contested. The offer of membership was not necessarily immediate or consensual.
(3) The decision-making process within NATO was characterized by a truth-seeking discourse on the appropriate policy towards the CEECs in which the participants reached a mutual understanding on the basis of a reasoned consensus.
(4) The negotiating process between NATO and the CEECs was also dominated by the discursive exchange of arguments about membership as the result of which the participants reached a reasoned consensus.
(5) Enlargement depended on the persuasive power of arguments that made NATO members agree to accession and CEE candidates fulfil the conditions of membership.
(6) Further enlargement rounds will build on the consensus reached between NATO members as well between NATO and the CEECs.

3.4 Rhetorical Action

Like communicative action, rhetorical action consists in a process of arguing in which the opponents challenge the validity claims of each other's standpoints and arguments. It differs from communicative action, however, in that the actors use arguments strategically or opportunistically (Schimmelfennig 1997; see also Elster 1991: 85-98). Rhetorical actors seek to justify their own beliefs and interests and to persuade others to accept their claims and to adopt their positions, but they are not prepared to be persuaded themselves by the better argument and to give up their own beliefs and goals. Nevertheless, the exchange of arguments can be consequential. On the one hand, rhetorical actors will change their claims and

arguments when they feel their audience is not persuaded. On the other hand, however, they cannot change their claims and arguments at will lest they lose their credibility and reputation. Therefore, they sometimes can be shamed into sticking to their previous statements and commitments against their current self-interest. Still, in contrast with communicative action, rhetorical action has no constitutive effects. Rhetorical actors may have to change their arguments for strategic reasons or suffer argumentative defeat but they will not reach a reasoned consensus or acquire a new identity and new interests at the end of a rhetorical exchange. Rhetorical action is hypothesized to have the following implications for NATO enlargement:

(1) The CEECs' attitude towards NATO membership followed their strategic and security interests. The goal of NATO membership was not necessarily consensually shared, and possibly even contested, among the states of the region.
(2) Likewise, the enlargement preferences of the NATO members corresponded to their (possibly diverging) strategic and security interests. The offer of membership was not necessarily immediate or consensual.
(3) The decision-making process within NATO was characterized by the strategic use of (normative) arguments by which the member states sought to justify and realize their own enlargement preferences.
(4) The negotiating process between NATO and the CEECs was dominated by the strategic use of norms and arguments in pursuit of self-interest.
(5) Enlargement depended on the ability of those actors who were interested in NATO expansion to mobilize public opinion against the opponents or to shame them into acquiescing in enlargement.
(6) Further enlargement rounds will start anew from the constellation of egoistic state interests and depend on successful strategic argumentation.

3.5 Strategic Action

The concept of strategic action is based on rationalist bargaining theory. As in rhetorical action, the actors are assumed to pursue their self-interest strategically and to maximize their gains from enlargement but instead of exchanging arguments they exchange threats (and promises). In order to issue (credible) threats, a state must possess superior bargaining power. The bargaining power of a state "is inversely proportional to the relative value that it places on agreement compared to the outcome of its best alternative policy".[11] In contrast to the basic proposition of club theory used above, enlargement does not have to benefit each member state in order to take place. Those member states that do not reap net benefits from enlargement will nevertheless agree to it if they are either fully compensated by the winners through side payments or if the winners can threaten them credibly with exclusion or

[11] Moravcsik 1998: 62. See his theoretical considerations on bargaining in the European Community (1998: 60-67) and Snyder's similar analysis of alliance bargaining (1997: 74-77).

unilateral policies (if the losses of exclusion for the opponents exceed the losses of enlargement). These are the observable implications of strategic action for the process of NATO expansion:

(1) The CEECs' attitude towards NATO membership corresponded to their (possibly diverging) strategic and security interests.
(2) Likewise, the enlargement preferences of the NATO members corresponded to their (possibly diverging) strategic and security interests. The offer of membership was not necessarily immediate or consensual.
(3) The decision-making process within NATO was characterized by distributive conflict and bargaining over the conditions and terms of enlargement.
(4) The negotiating process between NATO and the CEECs was also dominated by distributive conflict and bargaining.
(5) Enlargement depended on the superior bargaining power of those actors who were interested in NATO expansion.
(6) Further enlargement rounds will start anew from the constellation of egoistic state interests and depend on their relative bargaining power.

The main chapter of this report consists of "analytical episodes" from the process of NATO enlargement. These episodes are not intended to provide a full narrative account of the history of NATO enlargement. Instead, they serve to examine the process hypotheses developed above. This purpose governs the selection and presentation of relevant facts. The analytical episodes cover (1) the CEECs' interest in NATO membership, (2) the initial reaction of NATO, (3) the political strategy of the CEECs, (4) the change of preferences in two major member states, Germany and the United States, (5) the divergence of enlargement preferences within NATO, (6) the decision-making process in NATO that led to the first round of enlargement, (7) the process of negotiation between NATO and the CEECs, (8) the ratification of enlargement in the U.S., and (9) the post-enlargement process and the preparations for a second round of enlargement.

4 The CEECs' Interest in NATO Membership

The CEECs' bid to join NATO was neither an immediate nor an automatic consequence of their transition to democracy and the end of the Cold War. Rather, it was motivated by their concern about the security situation in central and eastern Europe, on the one hand, and by their disappointment with the CSCE as an organization of collective security, on the other.

When communist rule collapsed in the central European countries[12], the new governments declared the "return to Europe" their central foreign policy goal and almost immediately

[12] I will focus on the Central European countries of Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland that were the first countries to request membership and, later, to become members in NATO.

announced their interest in joining the European Community and the Council of Europe.[13] NATO membership, however, was not on their agenda at first. By contrast, they generally regarded NATO as a cold war organization that should give way (together with the Warsaw Pact) to a pan-European, collective security organization. During the period of communist rule, most democratic opposition groups and movements had not advocated "changing sides" but preferred to dissolve the adversary alliances and to assume a neutral or non-aligned status. They regarded the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) not only as an institution that would promote human rights in the communist countries but also as the nucleus for a new security organization for the whole of Europe. These ideas continued to dominate their thinking in security policy in the 1989-1991 period.

The Czechoslovak leadership represented by Havel and Dienstbier was the most explicit among the CEECs in its strategic vision of a new pan-European security organization based on the CSCE. Already in January 1990, Havel promoted his idea of "Europe as a friendly comity of independent nations and democratic states, a Europe that is stabilized, not divided into blocs and pacts, a Europe that does not need the protection of superpowers, because it is capable of defending itself, that is of building its own security system" (cit. in Cottey 1995: 65) During a visit to the United States in February 1990, he even suggested that NATO be dissolved and U.S. troops withdrawn from Europe (Ibid.). In Hungary, as a legacy of the 1956 revolution, the principle of neutrality received widespread support at the beginning and could be found in the programs of all parties ahead of the first free elections in the spring of 1990 (Cottey 1995: 94).

About a year later, in the spring of 1991, indications of change abounded in all three central European countries. They had not only come to regard NATO as an indispensable element in European security and to seek close cooperation with the Western alliance but also requested informal security guarantees and began to consider a future membership in NATO without, however, explicitly applying for accession (Cottey 1995: 37, 94, 97). The change in the Czechoslovak position was most conspicuous. In his address to the NATO Council, President Havel admitted he had learned that a system of pan-European collective security was more difficult to realize than it had seemed in the early days of central and eastern Europe's transition to democracy. Without giving up this idea, Havel now emphasized the importance of cooperation with NATO, and while admitting that his country could not become a full member of NATO at the moment, he argued that "an alliance of countries

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[13] For Hungary, see, e.g., FBIS-EEU-89-204, 24 October 1989; 5 and FBIS-EEU-90-016, 24 January 1990, 43. The same applies to Czechoslovakia and Poland.

united by the ideals of freedom and democracy should not be forever closed to neighbouring countries that are pursuing the same goals".[14] In the second half of 1991, the statements of interest in NATO membership became more concrete (Cottey 1995: 37, 69, 97). At their summit in Cracow in October 1991, all Visegrad states demanded a security guarantee as well as a general commitment to Eastern enlargement from NATO. "Since then, joining NATO has remained the focus of the Visegrad countries' security policy." (Hyde-Price 1996: 244).

This policy change can be attributed to three developments. First, it turned out in 1991 that the transition to democracy and national self-determination would not be as smooth and peaceful as it had begun in Central Europe. The Soviet crackdown in the Baltic republics in January and the Soviet coup d'état in August were a warning to the CEECs that the Soviet retreat from communism and imperialism was not irreversible. The war in Yugoslavia demonstrated the dangers of the nationalist revival that swept the entire region. Second, it became clear that the CSCE would not develop into a working system of collective security and that it could not effectively protect the CEECs against the threats that manifested themselves in Central and Eastern Europe. In this situation, the CEECs turned to NATO in order to obtain the security guarantees they desired, and since it had become obvious in the case of the Baltics and Yugoslavia that NATO would not provide these guarantees to non-members, they regarded NATO membership as the only viable option (Hyde-Price 1996: 242-244: Reisch 1994: 18-20; Rühl 1994: 102). Finally, the CEECs had learned that accession to the European Community which they had declared their first foreign policy priority after the end of the Cold War would take a very long time and require a difficult adaptation to the acquis communautaire. In this perspective, NATO membership appeared to be the less demanding way to achieve membership in the major Western organizations.

Thus, the CEECs' desire to become NATO members was not an automatic, taken-for-granted response to the collapse of communism and Soviet hegemony, as expected by the hypothesis of habitual action. If there was a habitualized response, it consisted in the calls for collective security or neutrality that had come to dominate the thinking of the democratic opposition in the CEECs in the 1970s and 1980s. Nor was the interest in joining NATO a corrolary of the community of values that developed between East and West, as predicted by the hypothesis of normative action: On the one hand, in Havel's initial view, a democratic Europe ought to be organized as a system of collective security not as an expanded alliance. On the other hand, the CEECs had already become interested in NATO membership at a time

[14] See "NATO Headquarters. Brussels, March 21, 1991", available at http://www.hrad.cz/president/Havel/speeches/1991/2103_uk.html (last visited 2 June 2000).

when most of them still were a far cry from consolidated liberal democracies. Governments with doubtful democratic credentials like Albania, Romania (before 1996) and Slovakia (before 1998) strove to join NATO no less than the more stable and reliable democracies of the region. Finally, if the interest in NATO membership really reflected "a more fundamental and deep-seated historical desire to be part of the 'West'" (Larrabee 1997: 103), it should have manifested itself immediately after the democratic revolutions and in parallel with the early, strong, and explicit demands for EC membership.

The timing and the circumstances of the CEECs' desire to join NATO suggest that it was of an instrumental kind --- to obtain the most (or, in fact, the only) efficient security guarantee for their states under the circumstances. This interpretation is supported by the statements in which CEE officials justified their interest in NATO membership. In his March 1991 speech in Brussels, President Havel based his turn towards NATO on the developments in the Soviet Union, the dangers of nationalism, and the insufficiencies of the CSCE. Czechoslovak foreign minister Dienstbier considered NATO so important because it was the only European security institution that "proved its effectiveness and viability".[15] In a collection of views from CEEC officials published in 1995, NATO membership figured as "the most efficient and abiding way to hedge against future pressures from Russia" (Karkoszka 1995: 78) and "the crucial safeguard against the unknown" (Bajarunas 1995: 105), whereas the "CSCE is incapable of providing the continental security system that was needed under the new circumstances" (Pascu 1995: 89). The instrumental quality of the CEE desire to join NATO is best subsumed under the rhetorical and strategic action perspectives but could also have been the starting point of a process of communicative action.

5 The Initial Reaction of NATO

When the central European governements expressed their interest in joining NATO in the course of 1991, they were confronted with general reticence among the NATO member states. Although NATO was prepared to establish and expand institutionalized cooperation with the former members of the Warsaw Pact, the expansion of NATO *membership* was rejected.

NATO had already declared its intention to redefine its relationship and enter into cooperative relations with the members of the Warsaw Pact before the central European governments indicated their desire to become NATO members.[16] In a declaration agreed at NATO's London summit in July 1990, the alliance offered them to formally put an end to

[15] FBIS-EEU-91-220, 14 November 1991, cited in Cottey 1995: 69.

[16] For an overview of NATO post-cold war policy towards the CEECs, see Broer 1997: 298-300.

confrontation, to establish permanent diplomatic relations with NATO and to base the future relationship on the principle of common security: In the new Europe, the security of each state was to be inseparably linked to that of its neighbors. Faced with the first demands for membership in the spring of 1991, NATO immediately signalled the CEECs to abstain from applying for NATO membership. At the same time, however, NATO felt that it needed to offer them a stronger and more institutionalized cooperation. For this purpose, U.S. secretary of state Baker and German foreign minister Genscher initiated, first, the "liaison concept" and then the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC). This constellation lasted well into 1993. At the beginning of this year, an informal discussion in the North Atlantic Council at the level of ambassadors still came to the conclusion that the membership of CEECs was not on the agenda, for the time being (Weisser 1999: 23).

Obviously, as in the case of the CEECs, enlargement was not an automatic, taken-for-granted response of NATO to the new international situation in Europe. Nor was it a close corollary of NATO's commitment to its constitutive values and norms: As early as May 1990, the member states agreed, at a meeting of their foreign ministers, that NATO would have to develop into an instrument for the promotion of peace and democracy in central and eastern Europe (Broer 1997: 298). On the occasion of President Havel's visit to NATO in March 1991, they welcomed the successes of Czechoslovakia in building a pluralist democracy on the foundation of human rights, viewed these achievements as an important contribution to the creation of a Europe whole and free, and vowed to encourage and support the reforms in all central and eastern European states.[17] In its declaration on "Partnership with the States of Central and Eastern Europe" of June 1991, the North Atlantic Council stated that the division of Europe was over, that "our own security is inseparably linked to that of all other states in Europe", and that the "consolidation and preservation throughout the continent of democratic societies and their freedom from any form of coercion or intimidation are therefore of direct and material concern to us."[18] Finally, during the coup d'état in the Soviet Union in August 1991, NATO issued a Ministerial Declaration in which the alliance not only reiterated the wording of its June statements but added that the "security of the new democracies" was of particular concern to it.[19]

On all of these occasions, however, NATO shied away from establishing a direct link between these references to its constitutive values and norms and a general commitment to the

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[17] Text in NATO Review 39: 2, 1991.

[18] Text in NATO Review 39: 3, 1991.

[19] Text in NATO Review 39:4, 1991

security of the democratic CEECs, on the one hand, and their membership in the alliance, on the other. Instead, NATO declared that "we will neither seek unilateral advantage from the changed situation in Europe nor threaten the legitimate interests of any state". NATO neither wished to isolate a country nor to create new divisions in Europe and attached central importance to the CSCE process and its further strengthening.[20]

The initial reaction of NATO to the demands of the CEECs corresponds to the expectations of rationalist alliance theory. The member states were not in need of expanding the alliance but rather feared that Eastern enlargement would weaken the cohesion and effectiveness of the alliance, create new financial burdens at a time when the member states expected a peace dividend, and, most importantly, risked to antagonize Russia and provoke nationalistic reactions and a new confrontation between East and West.[21] For NATO, the NACC process was an efficient institutional solution. NACC deepened and institutionalized cooperation with all CEECs without creating any formal obligations to guarantee their security. Whereas NATO committed itself rhetorically to the autonomy and security of the democratic societies in central and Eastern Europe, it did not tie its hands and ultimately remained free to take the action it considered to be in its own best interest. The kind of protection NATO had in mind at this time can be inferred from a statement by Secretary General Wörner that "NATO serves *as a security anchor in Western Europe* that helps the new democracies to develop their potential with the least instability and disorder and free from threat and intimidation" (Wörner 1991: web edition, my italics).

The NACC solution also corresponded to the relative bargaining power of NATO and the central European aspirants: The CEECs could not credibly threaten NATO with an alternative alliance. Nor could they persuasively argue that, in the absence of NATO membership, instability in the East would threaten the West. First, "self-inflicted chaos" was no credible bargaining strategy, because it was in the self-interest of the reform-minded governments of central Europe to develop stable political and economic systems. Second, given its resources, there was no doubt that NATO would be able to defend itself efficiently against any spill-over from instability in central Europe to their territories and their alliance.[22] Correspondingly, the

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[20] See Declaration on "Partnership with the States of Central and Eastern Europe". Text in NATO Review 39: 3, 1991.

[21] See the quotes in Fierke (1999: 35).

[22] The fact that NATO got involved in the wars in Yugoslavia cannot be attributed to threats or negative spill-over to NATO. As in the case of NATO enlargement, NATO took action after a long period of low-cost, symbolic engagement and due to a combination of moral pressure and American leadership.

most unstable states of the region have *not* been able to bargain their way into NATO but stand the *least* chances to become members. In game-theoretical language, the bargaining situation corresponded to a "suasion game" (Martin 1993: 104; Zürn 1992: 209-211) in which the CEECs had the dominant strategy to accept any form of relationship with NATO that the alliance members saw in their best interest. Insufficient and disappointing as NACC was for the central European governments, it was still preferable to the status quo of no institutionalized relations at all.

In sum, the initial outcome of the central European countries' bid to join NATO is best characterized as the rational result of the constellation of egoistic preferences and unequal bargaining power in the new Europe. Both the CEECs' interest in admission to NATO and NATO's initial refusal to give in to this interest corroborate the hypothesis of strategic action (but also are compatible with the initial conditions for a process of rhetorical or communicative action). It is remarkable, however, that NATO, at the same time, committed itself at least rhetorically to the security of the democratic states of central and eastern Europe and to the success and irreversibility of liberal democratic reform in the region. The crucial question, then, is how this initial, instrumental rejection of the CEECs' desire to join NATO was transformed and how the rhetorical commitment was turned into action.

6 The Strategy of the CEECs

In order to overcome the opposition of NATO member states to enlargement, the governments of the aspiring states appealed to the constitutive values and norms of the Euro-Atlantic liberal community. It has been the central argumentative strategy of the CEECs to portray themselves as part of the Euro-Atlantic community, to stress the instability of democratic achievements in their region, to show that NATO's liberal values and norms as well as historical precedent obliged its members to stabilize democracy in the CEECs and, for that purpose, to grant them membership in NATO.[23] This argumentative strategy was used publicly in speeches, interviews, and articles addressed to NATO, its member states, and their societies. Already the first speech of a CEE head of state at NATO, President Havel's address to the NATO Council in March 1991, incorporated all of these rhetorical motives and served

[23] See Fierke 1999: 37-39; Radu 1997; and Schimmelfennig 2000: 129-132 on the argumentative strategy of the CEECs.

as a model for the CEEC efforts to persuade NATO. I will therefore quote at length from this speech and complement it by other examples. [24]

(1) *Return to Europe*. In a first step, the CEECs sought to define themselves as "European" and "democratic" and detach themselves from their communist and "Eastern" history in order to show that they belonged to the Euro-Atlantic liberal community. They interpreted the political changes after the Cold War as their "return to Europe", to a civilizational community to which they had traditionally belonged and from which they had been artificially cut off during communist rule. At the beginning of his speech, President Havel expressed his satisfaction that he could "address you today as a representative of a democratic and independent country that shares your ideals and wishes to cooperate with you and to be your friend". A few months later at the same place, Polish President Walesa quoted from the preamble of the North Atlantic Treaty when he affirmed that "we are determined to safeguard the freedom, the common heritage and civilization, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law." He added that the Polish people had wanted to subscribe to these values for a long time and had stood up for them in World War II and in its repeated revolts against communist rule.[25]

The claim to belong to "Europe" in the emphatic, not just geographical, sense and to "Western civilization" was not limited to the central European countries but was also put forward by states for which it was far from self-evident. In an effort to purge Romania of its Eastern or Balkanic image, Romanian minister of defense Melescanu defined his country as a "Central European country close to the Balkans" (Melescanu 1993: web edition) and Romanian ambassador Ene asserted that "Romania has always been part of West European traditions (Ene 1997: web edition). Lithuanian ambassador Stankevicius similarly affirmed that the "integration of Lithuania and the other two Baltic states into the community of Western nations means a return to their natural places in the international community" and that "despite 50 years of suppression, the Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian nations have managed to preserve their affinity to Western European civilization" (Stankevicius 1996, web edition).

Critical observers have noted, however, that "appeals to Western Europe on behalf of 'Central Europe' are consistently made by offsetting it against a barbarous East" (Neumann 1993: 367) and "that the state of the subject is not only European, but that the next state to the

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[24] See "NATO Headquarters. Brussels, March 21, 1991", available at http://www.hrad.cz/president/Havel/speeches/1991/2103_uk.html (last visited 2 June 2000).

[25] See NATO Review 39: 4, 1991. Quoted from the German edition ("NATO Brief").

east is not European" (Neumann 1998: 406). For instance, "while all nations deny the Balkan label, they frequently use it to describe their neighbors" (Radu 1997: 49). Just as the central European countries expected NATO to differentiate between them and the other CEECs (see, e.g., Cottey 1995: 38), Melescanu tried to detach Romania from the Balkans and Stankevicius asserted that "the Eurasian commonwealth represented by the CIS is foreign to most Lithuanians" (1996: web edition).

(2) Democracy in Danger. In a second move, the CEEC representatives depicted their return to freedom and democracy as unstable and endangered. In his speech before NATO, Czech President Havel referred to unexpected "obstacles" to the "building of a democratic system and the transition to a market economy", the "unfortunate inheritance, which these countries must deal with", the "general demoralization", and the fragility and vulnerability of CEE democracies. As a result of these and other factors, Havel said, "our countries are dangerously sliding into a certain political, economic and security vacuum. [...] At the same time, it is becoming evident that without appropriate external links the very existence of our young democracies is in jeopardy."

(3) *Exhorting NATO*. In a third rhetorical move, CEEC representatives appealed to NATO's self-styled identity as the security organization of the entire Euro-Atlantic community of democratic countries and to its self-attributed mission to encourage and secure democracy in Europe. Against the enlargement skeptics' preoccupation with military security and strategic concerns, Havel warned that "[t]he alliance should urgently remind itself that it is first and foremost an instrument of democracy to defend mutually held and created political and spiritual values. It must see itself not as a pact of nations against a more or less obvious enemy, but as a guarantor of Euro-American civilization."[26] In a similar way, Stankevicius deplored that "[s]ometimes, in discussions on NATO enlargement, one hears voices in the West warning that the Baltic states are 'indefensible'. However, the concept of indefensible European states is in complete discord with modern principles of European democracy." For the central and eastern European advocates of NATO enlargement, their entitlement to join NATO followed logically from their European, liberal identity and their need for the protection of democracy, on the one hand, and NATO's identity as the military organization of the Euro-Atlantic community and its historical mission of promoting and protecting democracy, on the other. By rejecting to commit itself to Eastern enlargement, NATO would betray its own values and norms, break its promises, and act inconsistently. President Havel started out by reminding his audience of how the

"democratic West [*framing NATO as a democratic community*] ... succeeded for years in withstanding the expansion of the totalitarian system of the Communist type, sympathizing with the countries of the Soviet bloc and never ceasing to believe that these forces would be victorious. ... Its commitment to the protection of democracy and human liberty was an encouragement and inspiration also for the citizens of our countries." [*positive invocation of past value-based commitments and practices*] "From this," Havel concluded, "arises a great responsibility for the West. It cannot be indifferent to what is happening in the countries which --- constantly encouraged by the Western democracies --- have finally shaken off the totalitarian system. It cannot look on passively at how laboriously these countries are striving to find their new place in the present world. The West, whose civilization is founded on universal values, cannot be indifferent to the fate of the East." [*appeals to consistency with democratic identity and past promises and behavior*] (my comments)

Once more appealing to the constitutive values of NATO, inter-democratic solidarity, and the democratic conscience of NATO members, Havel affirmed that "an alliance of countries united by a commitment to the ideal of freedom and democracy should not remain permanently closed to neighbouring countries which are pursuing the same goals" and expressed his firm belief that NATO-Czechoslovak cooperation, "based on mutual trust and shared values, will strengthen the feeling of security in our society and will result in appropriate guarantees, thanks to which the Czechoslovak citizens will not have to fear the future and, in case of any threat, will not feel isolated and forgotten by the democratic community." The CEEC leaders reinforced their appeals to the democratic conscience and solidarity of the West by explicit shaming. Repeatedly, they invoked the "Yalta" metaphor in order to arouse feelings of historical guilt and to create moral pressure. For instance, President Walesa bluntly denounced the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program that fell short of CEEC membership expectations, as "Yalta II". More subtly, President Havel declared on the occasion of President Clinton's visit to Prague in January 1994, "At one time, the city of Yalta went down in history as a symbol of the division of Europe. I would be happy if today the city of Prague emerged as a symbol of Europe's standing in alliance." (Grayson 1999: 84, 87).

CEEC representatives further appealed to the multilateralist norms of NATO. For instance, Polish premier minister Suchocka deplored a "new post-Cold War isolationism" (1993: web edition). Lithuanian Ambassador Stankevicius referred to the principle of "indivisible security" in order to justify the Baltic states' inclusion in NATO enlargement. But then his indifference toward a dividing line east of Lithuania reveals the instrumental character of his appeal: "The existing line between the European and Eurasian areas of political, economic and defence integration can hardly be regarded as a dangerous division of Europe" (1996: web edition). And whereas representatives of the central European countries

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[26] International Herald Tribune, 15 May 1997.

were disappointed that NATO did not differentiate them from the other CEECs, Romanian defense minister Spiroiu referred to the multilateralist norm of "equal security" in order to reject "any type of discrimination".[27]

Finally, CEEC officials adduced historical precedent to advance the cause of NATO enlargement. Melescanu, for example, recalled the importance of "certain external factors ... in securing both the consolidation and the irreversibility" of democratic transition in Southern Europe and pointed to German-French reconciliation and the avoidance of Greco-Turkish war as an example for how the relationship between Hungary and Romania would be improved if not only Hungary but also Romania was admitted to NATO (1993: web edition).

The efforts of the CEECs to achieve NATO membership and to overcome the opposition or reticence of the organization are best characterized as rhetorical action. They used value- and norm-based arguments to apply moral or social pressure on NATO and its members and to expose the inconsistency between declared values, organizational norms, and past practice, on the one hand, and current behavior towards the CEECs, on the other. By framing NATO as a democratic community rather than a military alliance, the enlargement issue as one of democracy promotion and protection rather than one of military deterrence and defense, and by invoking the treaty principles and obligations as well as the past practices and promises of NATO members, they sought to lock NATO into the organization's own public justifications, self-images and mission statements and thereby to shame NATO into committing itself to enlargement.

What indicates the rhetorical, as opposed to a communicatively rational, quality of the CEECs' argumentative behavior? First, it was the instrumental use of norm-based arguments in pursuit of their individual security, that is for egoistic, not universal goals. Lacking the *material* bargaining power to make NATO accept their membership, it was strategically rational for the CEECs to use *social* pressure instead. Second, the CEECs used the value- and norm-based arguments in a self-serving, competitive, and opportunistic manner. They interpreted the values and norms in a way that served their egoistic interests, emphasized their own qualification for membership in comparison with other candidates. Third, CEEC advocates did not necessarily limit themselves to norm-based arguments. For instance, Melescanu not only sought to portray Romania as part of "Central Europe" and Western civilization but also alluded to material and strategic benefits of NATO enlargement when he referred to Romania's geographical position, population, and territorial size (1993: web edition). It is a characteristic of rhetorical action that proponents of a claim pursue a variety of

[27] FBIS-EEU-94-007, 11 January 1994, 28.

argumentative strategies, in particular if the audience is perceived to be diffuse or pluralistic and different parts of the audience are assumed to be persuaded by different kinds of arguments.

Finally, the CEEC advocates adapted their argumentative strategies to the audiences they addressed and to the arguments they thought would be most persuasive with, and asked of them in, a particular audience. For instance, whereas Polish officials had initially focused on the security vacuum in central Europe and a potential Russian threat in justifying their request for NATO membership (which was close to the "true" motivation), during the ratification campaign in the U.S. ambassador Kozminski stressed the integration of Poland in the West and argued that "enlargement would even strengthen Polish-Russian relations" (Grayson 1999: 138; see also 169). Officials of the Polish embassy "realized the importance of seizing the moral high ground. Thus, in public pronouncements and in exchanges with officials, the embassy reiterated that 'expansion would contribute to democracy [and] promote [European] stability" (Grayson 1999: 165). Radu shows that this adaptive behavior was widespread:

> "[U]pon being to an avalanche of such arguments [that NATO's expansion had nothing to do with a potential Russian threat] from NATO officials and respected Western analysts, most Central and Eastern European leaders have felt compelled to repeat them, often against their own beliefs and personal experience, and generally at the risk of sounding unrealistic at home. Hence, the claim that NATO's expansion is not directed against Russia but in fact enhances Russian security has been dutifully put forward by all the governments of Central and Eastern Europe." (Radu 1997: 44)

7 Preference Change in Germany and the United States

In 1993, enlargement preferences began to change in two major NATO member states, Germany and the United States of America. In both cases, it was the interaction of personal convictions and political calculations that produced an enlargement advocacy of leading state officials. Whereas, however, in Germany, defence minister Rühe failed to bring about an inter-bureaucratic consensus, the few initial proponents of enlargement in the U.S. administration were able to make enlargement official U.S. policy thanks to the support of President Clinton and the impact of presidential power.

7.1 Germany[28]

In the first years after the end of the Cold War, the German preferences resembled that of the Central European states. On the one hand, Germany had been a leading advocate of EC

[28] On Germany's enlargement policy, see Wolf 1996.

membership for the CEECs early on. On the other hand, the German government did not promote a parallel enlargement of NATO but, under the aegis of foreign minister Genscher, pursued the project of pan-European security structures. In addition to strengthening the CSCE, Germany actively supported the establishment and deepening of NATO cooperation with the CEECs. Yet, when the Central European governments brought up the issue of NATO membership, "Bonn's initial reaction was no warmer than that of any other member state" (Wolf 1996: 201).

The situation in Germany began to change when Volker Rühe became minister of defense in 1992. Already before assuming office, the question of Central Europe's democratic transformation and integration into Western organizations had been on Rühe's mind. Long before the breakdown of communism, Rühe had established contact with Polish dissidents that were to become members of the new governing elite at the beginning of the 1990s. Rühe felt that Germany had a special responsibility for the democratic consolidation and the stability of Central Europe and Poland, in particular. Moreover, Rühe was not so much interested in military affairs in the narrow sense. Having served as the foreign policy spokesman of the CDU's parliamentary caucus, he did not simply view himself as the minister of defense but intended to use his position to make general foreign policy. His affinity to Poland, his beliefs about German responsibility in Central Europe, and his personal ambitions made Rühe highly amenable to the demands and arguments of his Polish friends and acquaintances for membership in NATO. He decided to make NATO enlargement his personal foreign-policy project.[29]

Rühe's personal interest and policy entrepreneurship and the corporate beliefs of the Federal Ministry of Defense complemented one another well. In the defense ministry's dominant mind-set, Germany figured as the vulnerable frontline state of the West. As a legacy of the Cold War, its strategic thinking was preoccupied with the question of how to reduce the threat to Germany's Eastern border and to maximize early warning times and mobilization periods. In this perspective, Central Europe was regarded as a strategic glacis. Central Europe's integration into NATO would stabilize the political situation of this glacis, on the one hand, and move the border of the West further to the East, thereby relieving Germany of its frontline status, on the other. Finally, consideration for Russia did not figure prominently in either Rühe's personal or the defense ministry's collective outlook. [30]

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[29] Background interviews Federal Ministry of Defense; Interview Kamp; Weisser 1999: 24f.

[30] Background interviews Federal Ministry of Defense.

It is difficult to say whether Rühe was motivated more strongly by these security considerations and his personal ambitions or by his affinity and sympathy with Poland and his perception of Germany's responsibility in Central Europe.[31] Most probably, both motivations reinforced each other, with personal ambitions and security interests providing the necessary impetus to push a policy that resonated well with Rühe's beliefs. Together with his no less visionary and politcally-minded planning staff director, Admiral Weisser, Rühe set about putting his project to action in early 1993. The occasion Rühe had looked for to present his views was the Alistair Buchan Memorial Lecture at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in March 1993 in which he demanded that the "Atlantic Alliance must not become a 'closed shop'. I cannot see one good reason for denying future members of the European Union membership in NATO." Going even further, Rühe asked himself "whether membership in the European Union should necessarily precede accession to NATO" (Rühe 1993: 135).

This strong pro-enlargement preference was not shared, however, in other branches of the German government. Foreign minister Kinkel, while also urging NATO to "think over its reticence toward the admission of Central and Eastern in view of the conflicts in east and south-east Europe", did not see any "urgent need to decide" this issue. He feared that enlargement would threaten the cohesion of the alliance and its military credibility and warned that the isolation of Russia and Ukraine would put at risk the security gains from the end of the Cold War. Instead he proposed a half-way house between full membership and loose cooperation and gave clear priority to the enlargement of the European Community.[32] Again, these views were congruent with the profile of the foreign office in which consideration for Russia and proponents of a "Russia-first" policy were much stronger than at the Hardthöhe.

The controversy between Rühe and Kinkel became more pronunciated in the second half of 1993 and throughout 1994 (Hacke 1997; Weisser 1999: 63-66; Wolf 1996: 205-209). Rühe continued to urge NATO to prepare for expansion ahead of the EC, denied Russia any right to

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[31] Wolf (1996: 206) stresses the importance of the more egoistic rationale whereas my interview partners at the ministry of defence emphasized the principled beliefs and personal contacts. The main argument Wolf puts forward for his view is Rühe's preference for a limited enlargement focusing on Germany's most important Eastern neighbor, Poland. However, Rühe's "Poland first" policy is also consistent with the scope of his personal contacts.

[32] "Auf der Suche nach einem Mittelweg", Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ), 6 March 1993, 5 (quote); "Verantwortung, Realismus, Zukunftssicherung - Deutsche Außenpolitik in einer sich neu ordnenden Welt", FAZ, 19 March 1993, 4; "'Rußland und die Ukraine auszugrenzen würde alles zunichte machen'", FAZ, 10 November, 6.

a say in this matter, and, early in the process, already suggested to limit enlargement to the Visegrad countries. Kinkel criticized Rühe as being "too brash"[33] and openly disagreed with him in a speech before top Bundeswehr officers.[34] He constantly warned against an early decision on dates and candidates for enlargement and expressed his understanding for Russian misgivings about the expansion of the Western alliance. Furthermore, he proposed to develop NATO-CEE relations on a broader and less differentiated basis and indicated that NATO enlargement might wait until the EC enlargement became more concrete. In part, this controversy developed and continued because Chancellor Kohl did not take a clear stance on the issue. In the course of the enlargement debate, however, Kohl sided with Kinkel rather than Rühe. Faced with Russian opposition against NATO expansion, he tried to slow down the process and to placate Russia as much as possible (Wolf 1996: 202, 205)

In sum, there was no German *state* preference for rapid NATO enlargement in 1993 and 1994. Reinhard Wolf is right to stress that "Bonn never did speak with a single voice [...]. The federal government as a whole was never as enthusiastic about this project as it might appear from Rühe's statements alone. In fact, it seems that on this issue, the defence minister was rather isolated [...]" (1996: 205). Consequently, whereas Rühe sought to commit NATO to the goal of Eastern enlargement at the Travemünde meeting of NATO defence ministers in October 1993 (Weisser 1999: 49f), "the German delegation that Chancellor Kohl led to the 1994 NATO summit in Brussels had no intention of advocating any specific measures to procede with expansion" (Wolf 1996: 203).

7.2 The United States[35]

Leading Bush administration officials had already begun to venture the possibility of NATO enlargement in the second half of 1992 without being able to turn enlargement into official policy ahead of the presidential elections (Goldgeier 1999: 18; Solomon 1997: 19). When the Clinton administration took over, NATO enlargement appeared to be even further removed from the political agenda given the strong domestic and economic focus of Clinton's campaign. As in the case of Rühe, however, principled beliefs, personal contacts, and political interests interacted to produce a pro-enlargement policy. In contrast to Germany, however, this policy, although a minority position in the beginning, was endorsed by the head of government and could therefore be turned into official policy.

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[33] Der Spiegel 17/1995, 23.

[34] "Kinkel und Rühe uneins über Nato-Erweiterung", FAZ, 7 October 1994, 1-2.

[35] On the U.S. decision-making process, see Goldgeier 1999 and Grayson 1999.

In the years of 1992 and 1993, U.S. advocates of NATO enlargement were few and scattered over different branches of government, the bureaucracy, academia, and society. The motivations of the proponents were not uniform but stem from roughly four, sometimes overlapping, sources.[36] One group of proponents, represented, for instance, by Republican senators, viewed NATO enlargement as a means to reap the gains of Cold War victory, to consolidate NATO in order to maintain U.S. leadership in European security affairs, and to protect central Europe against a possible resurgent Russian imperialism. Others, including Kissinger, Holbrooke (then U.S. ambassador to Germany) and the RAND-based authors of an early and influential *Foreign Affairs* article promoting NATO enlargement (Asmus/Kugler/ Larrabee 1993) shared German concerns about instability on its eastern border or were concerned about a possible German unilateralism in central and eastern Europe. A third group of advocates had a personal affiliation with central Europe. These proponents had either central European origins like former National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski (who also belonged to the first group), Charles Gati at the State Department or Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. Others "had gone native" (Interview Kupchan) as a result of their studies or their diplomatic carreers. This applies in particular to the proponents of enlargement within the State Department. Finally, there were those motivated by liberal ideas of promoting and protecting democracy. This group was headed by National Security Adviser Lake and President Clinton. Thus, the proponents of enlargement did not constitute an "epistemic community" or "advocacy network" united by common principled and causal beliefs but consisted of diverse partially competing political forces pursuing the same goal for different reasons.

In order to explain the development of U.S. enlargement policy, the role of President Clinton and key figures of his administration is of paramount importance.[37] Goldgeier describes both Clinton and his National Security Adviser Lake as "intellectual heirs of Woodrow Wilson, believing that the expansion of international institutions and the promotion of freedom [...] could increase global peace and prosperity" (1999: 20). During their first months in office, Lake and his collaborators (above all Jeremy Rosner) sought to turn these

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[36] Goldgeier 1999: 170f; interviews Goldgeier and Kupchan.

[37] Here, I follow Goldgeier (1999). Grayson (1999: 54) emphasizes that the ideas of the "RAND boys" (Asmus, Kugler, and Larrabee) and the early advocacy of enlargement by Senator Lugar "provided the main impetus for acceptance of NATO expansion". The available evidence suggests, however, that the enlargement preferences of the White House began to develop independently of these inputs and before the RAND article was published in the fall of 1993.

general beliefs --- which Clinton had only touched upon briefly and marginally in his campaign --- into a foreign policy agenda for the Clinton administration. This agenda came to be known as "democratic enlargement" (Brinkley 1996). Lake presented "enlargement" as a successor to "containment" in his speech at the School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) in Washington in September 1993. Based on the Wilsonian insight "that our own security is shaped by the character of foreign regimes", he put forward that "we must promote democracy and market economics in the world --- because it protects our interests and security; and because it reflects values that are both American and universal" (Lake 1993: 15). One of the "components to a strategy of enlargement" he listed was to "help foster and consolidate new democracies and market economies [...] where we have the strongest security concerns and where we can make the greatest difference." (Lake 1993: 15, 16) The "new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe" were a "clear example, given their proximity to the great democratic powers of Western Europe." (Lake 1993: 16). According to Lake, "Clinton embraced the enlargement concept almost immediately" as it resonated with his liberal beliefs (Brinkley 1996: 116). Neither Clinton nor Lake seemed to be strongly interested in or committed to NATO as such but rather regarded it as an instrument for the promotion of democracy and for the protection of an enlarged democratic community (Interview Goldgeier). Although Lake did not explicitly call for NATO enlargement, he announced that "we will seek to update NATO, so that there continues behind the enlargement of market democracies an essential collective security" (Lake 1993: 16).

These liberal beliefs about the value of democracy promotion, together with his positive attitude towards and interest in Europe stemming from his studies at Oxford University, may have made President Clinton particularly susceptible to the central European arguments for NATO enlargement. He was directly confronted with them when he met CEEC leaders, among them Presidents Havel and Walesa, one on one in April 1993 in Washington on the occasion of the opening of the Holocaust Memorial Museum. Lake reported that Clinton was "impressed [...] with the passion with which these leaders spoke" and "inclined to think positively toward expansion from that day on" (Goldgeier 1999: 20). The emotionally charged atmosphere of a day filled with memories of Europe's darkest age may have added special weight to the CEE leaders' arguments on the need of promoting and protecting democracy in their countries.

It would be too simple, however, to attribute the U.S. government's "conversion" to NATO enlargement to the liberal beliefs of Clinton and Lake and to the power of the CEE leaders' arguments. First, the strategy of "enlargement" in general and the policy of NATO

enlargement in particular also served instrumental, mainly domestic, purposes. First, "Lake and others had developed democracy promotion as a Clinton campaign theme [...] also because they hoped to united different wings of the Democratic Party around foreign policy, and in particular to bring conservative Democrats back into the fold after their defecion during the Reagan and Bush years." (Goldgeier 1999: 21)

Second, Clinton felt he needed to respond to the critics who accused him of lacking a clear direction in foreign policy and to devise a strategic doctrine if he was to enter the ranks of great American presidents. "Democratic enlargement" served these needs (Brinkley 1996: 113f). NATO expansion, then, appeared to be a suitable policy to implement "democratic enlargement". "Concern about instability in central and Eastern Europe" was widespread. The enlargement project demonstrated that "the administration had a NATO policy", "a Democratic president could conduct foreign and defense policy effectively" and that Clinton was willing and able to exert leadership in Europe (Goldgeier 1999: 9, 77 (quotes); Stuart 1996: 120).

Third, NATO enlargement was an important issue with Americans of central European descent and could be the pivotal decisive for their voting behavior. It was not lost on both Democrats and Republicans that, in 1992, Clinton had carried 12 out of the 14 states with the largest East European ethnic populations after several elections in which they had supported the Republicans (Goldgeier 1999: 100; Stuart 1996: 121). Moreover, "[s]ince these states accounted for more than half of the electoral votes that Clinton received in that year, they were recognized as indispensable for a victory in 1996." In the competition for the "Polish vote", the Republicans regularly sponsored congressional legislation intended to push the issue, included it in the "Contract With America", their platform for the congressional elections of 1994, and, in the Dole campaign of 1996, tried to exploit the disappointment of voters of CEE descent with the slow progress in enlargement by naming candidates and announcing dates of accession. The Clinton administration, in turn, sought not get the Republicans ahead on this issue and was thus under pressure to speed up the enlargement process. In this respect, it is no coincidence that the administration's NATO policy was first presented, in January 1994, to a domestic audience in Milwaukee, "home to a large number of Americans of central and eastern European descent", that the administration chose to publicly announce 1999 as the date for enlargement during the presidential campaign of 1996, and that it "chose Detroit, and its heavily Polish suburb of Hamtramck" to do so (Goldgeier 1999: 53, 78, 102, 106; Stuart 1996: 121). Thus, although it may be correct, as the proponents of enlargement within the administration claim, that domestic political concerns were not at the

origin of NATO enlargement[38], there can be no doubt that ethnic and Republican pressure as well as electoral considerations moved the administration to remain on track and to speed up the implementation of enlargement within the alliance, as Republicans claim.[39]

However, NATO enlargement initially was a minority position and met with considerable opposition in the bureaucracy. Not even the NSC apparatus stood behind the policy advocated by the National Security Adviser --- its Senior Director for European Affairs, Jennone Walker, who chaired the Interagency Group that prepared the January 1994 NATO summit in Brussels, openly opposed it (Goldgeier 1999: 23f). At the Department of State, only a small group of officials favored enlargement, and at the Department of Defense such support was virtually non-existent. In both ministeries and in the NSC, the dominant opinion was to develop cooperation between NATO and the CEECs along the lines introduced with NACC and to propose Partnership for Peace (PfP) as an alternative to enlargement. In October 1993, the agencies reached a compromise that made PfP the focus of practical NATO policy and included a statement about the principled openness of the alliance. This formulation was acceptable to all participants but did not reflect a genuine consensus. "From the moment the participants [of the Principals Committee meeting] went their separate ways, observers noticed that they interpreted the decision differently." (Goldgeier 1999: 42) Whereas the opponents of enlargement took the reference to enlargement as merely a declaration that was not to become policy in the foreseeable future, the few advocates of enlargement regarded it as a general commitment to be implemented soon. And when President Clinton, on the occasion of his visits to Prague and Warsaw in 1994, declared that "now the question is no longer whether but when and how", this was seen as rhetoric by the former and as a call for action by the latter.

The ambiguity lasted until September 1994 when U.S: ambassador to Germany Holbrooke returned to Washington as Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs and set out to enforce enlargement policy within the bureaucracy. When he "told an interagency group that there was a presidential policy to enlarge NATO that needed implementation", he met with doubts and opposition by leading Pentagon officials. The exchange escalated to a point at which Holbrooke charged the opponents with disloyalty to the president. It took a high-level meeting with the president in December 1994, that Secretary of Defense Perry had

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[38] See Goldgeier (1999: 166) and my interviews with administration and CRS officials. Incidentally, this view is shared by Kupchan who worked at the NSC in 1993 and was an opponent of enlargement (Interview Kupchan).

[39] Interview Brzezinski.

called for, to dispel any doubts that Clinton supported Lake and Holbrooke in their efforts to go ahead with NATO enlargement. In the end, even explicit enlargement skeptics such as Perry and Talbott fell in alongside the presidential policy and played an important role in its implementation. Thus, in the analysis of Goldgeier, "NATO enlargement emerged during 1994 as the central focus of the administration's NATO policy not because the proponents of the Partnership for Peace changed their mind, but rather as a result of the policy entrepreneurship of Anthony Lake and Richard Holbrooke" (1999: 44). It was not the outcome of an interagency deliberation leading to consensus but, ultimately, resulted from hierarchical presidential authority.

7.3 Conclusion

In two major NATO member states, the United States and Germany, leading state representatives committed themselves to a policy of NATO enlargement to be implemented in the near future. Both cases are similar in that the interaction of principles, persuasion, and politics produced this policy. Both Clinton and Rühe held principled beliefs (democracy promotion and responsibility for central Europe) that made them responsive to the arguments of their central European interlocutors. These beliefs and arguments, however, were not sufficient to make the difference because the opponents or skeptics in Germany, the U.S. and other NATO member states can be assumed to have shared these principled beliefs about the promotion and protection of democracy and to have been exposed to the same arguments of CEEC officials. In order to explain why the Clinton administration and the Rühe ministery were the only NATO state actors that strongly pushed "fast-track" enlargement, additional and variable factors must come into play: For both Clinton/Lake and Rühe, NATO enlargement was a welcome issue to define or sharpen their personal foreign policy agendas in political competition with other bureaucratic agencies (Rühe) and parties (Clinton). In addition, the Rühe initiative was supported by the specific geopolitical concerns of his ministry (which were shared by some proponents of enlargement in the United States but did not seem to have been central to Clinton, Lake and their collaborators) whereas the Clinton/Lake initiative was at least given additional momentum by election concerns (which were absent in the German case).

Thus, while the policy of NATO enlargement generally was in line with the basic normative persuasions of state leaders in the East and in the West, normative action is no more sufficient to explain enlargement advocacy among the NATO member states than it was to account for the CEE interest in NATO. Nor was rhetorical action by the CEE state leaders

sufficient to turn reluctant or disinterested Western officials into proponents of CEEC membership. Rather, it was some sort of egoistic political interest that tipped the balance and led Clinton/Lake and Rühe to pursue a policy that was consistent with but not determined by their principled foreign policy beliefs and the CEEC arguments. Finally, the difference between Germany and the United States must ultimately be explained by power differentials. That Clinton, Lake, and Holbrooke were able to make NATO enlargement official state policy --- whereas Rühe was not --- cannot be attributed to better or more persuasive arguments on the part of the American advocates of enlargement or less concern with NATO efficiency or Russian reactions in the U.S: government but only to the fact that a fast-track enlargement policy was pushed and backed by the highest U.S. authority whereas Chancellor Kohl did not unequivocally support Rühe's initiative.

8 The Enlargement Preferences of the U.S. Allies

The enlargement preferences of America's NATO allies strongly diverged. In the beginning, this divergence concerned the question of whether to expand NATO to the East at all or in the near future. When the general decision to implement enlargement was made at the end of 1994, the number and the selection of CEECs to be admitted to NATO remained controversial until the last minute at the 1997 Madrid summit. The divergent enlargement preferences reflect different national interests that are best explained by geopolitical location and outlook. I will focus on the four major European allies and contrast Germany, the European ally most favorable to the project of enlargement with France, Italy, and the United Kingdom which headed the coalition of "brakemen" within the alliance.[40]

France. Even before NATO enlargement was on the agenda, France was opposed to strengthening the security cooperation between NATO and the CEECs in the framework of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (Boniface 1996: 185; Broer 1997: 303). In 1993, then, France actively pursued alternative plans for European security. In April, prime minister Balladur proposed a NATO-independent Stability Pact for Central and Eastern Europe, and in December of the same year, foreign minister Juppé put forward the idea of associating the CEECs to the West European Union (WEU) instead of NATO membership. Finally, ahead of

[40] For these states, information is most readily available, and we can assume that they exerted the greatest influence in NATO decision-making. In order to exclude effects of the negotiation process on the stated preferences as far as possible, I assessed the preferences on the general commitment to enlargement in 1993 and those on the inclusiveness ahead of the Madrid summit of 1997.

the Madrid summit, France was the most active proponent of a larger first round of enlargement. In particular, the French government advocated the inclusion of Romania.

The initial French opposition to NATO enlargement is generally attributed to concerns about power relations within the Western alliance.[41] On the hand, the French government perceived NATO enlargement as a way to maintain U.S. dominance in the new Europe. Since the times of President de Gaulle, France had regarded NATO as an instrument of U.S. military preponderance, refused to participate in NATO's integrated military structures, and to strengthen autonomous European military capabilities in the framework of the WEU. Consequently, France viewed with suspicion all efforts to define new tasks for NATO, the CEECs' strong interest in U.S. military presence and protection, and their preparedness to fully participate in NATO's military integration. On the other hand, France was concerned about the strengthening of Germany's influence within the alliance. Due to Germany's strong economic involvement in its Eastern neighboring states, it regarded the Central European aspiring countries as natural allies of Germany. In this regard, the French preference for a larger first round of enlargement can be interpreted as a way to balance German influence in Central Europe by including Romania which France regarded as "her" candidate and client.

Italy. Although Italy, in contrast with France, did not explicitly criticize or oppose NATO enlargement, it advocated a slow pace (Dassú/Menotti 1997: 5). Later, it demanded a larger selection of candidates for the first round of enlargement and mainly supported Romania and Slovenia. According to Dassú and Menotti, the "lack of enthusiasm" for enlargement can be explained by Italy's dominant preoccupation with Mediterranean security and the "Southern flank" of NATO. After the decision to expand NATO was made, "the only way to 'balance' NATO's inevitable drive eastward was to support some credible candidates in South Eastern Europe as an exercise in damage-control that moved Italy from the goal of slower to that of larger enlargement" (1997: 5-7).

United Kingdom. The British position was characterized by reticence towards the enlargement of the alliance, too. In contrast to France, however, the British government was mainly concerned about possible repercussions of enlargement on NATO's cohesiveness and effectiveness. At various occasions, British ministers warned that NATO was not a "social club" and that membership was not merely "a political statement". Enlargement should enhance the security of the alliance as a whole and not just that of individual members.[42]

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[41] Boniface 1997: 5; Dannreuther 1997: 77; Manfrass-Sirjacques 1997: 202f; Mihalka 1994: 6; Weisser 1999: 38f, 78.

[42] See the statements quoted in Mihalka 1994: 6.

Regarding the scope of enlargement, Britain generally favored a small enlargement excluding the Balkanic and Baltic aspirants. In contrast with Germany and the United States, however, Britain would have welcomed Slovenia in the first round as well.[43]

On the one hand, British preferences can be attributed to the lack of British stakes in Central and Eastern Europe. Britain was little involved in the region economically and located sufficiently far away in order not be preoccupied with instability in the region. Rather, the British government was strongly concerned with the reaction of Russia to NATO enlargement in 1993 (Mihalka 1994: 6; Taylor 1997: 218; Weisser 1999: 38). On the other hand, British reticence resulted from a strong commitment to the alliance as a military organization. The British government initially feared that the admission of non-Western and militarily weak new members would dilute the alliance and reduce its military capacity.

Germany. Although Rühe's strong enlargement advocacy was not shared by the foreign minister and the chancellor, the German government was in general favorably disposed towards the admission of CEECs. Moreover, the German government wanted enlargement to be limited to the Central European countries. A position paper drafted by an interministerial working group that was set up after the 1994 elections names the Visegrad coutries as the preferential candidates for a parallel enlargement of the EU and NATO and rejects a collective admission of all aspiring countries (Hacke 1997: 240f). Immediately ahead of the Madrid summit, the German government did not take a unified and clear position. Whereas Rühe stuck to the earlier consensus on three new members, Kinkel avoided to take a clear position and said he was content with "three, four or five new members". On the one hand, this was a tactical move of symbolic support for the French partners: Germany had not backed France in the controversy on AFSOUTH and now could show some cheap loyalty as it considered the decision for three members a done deal. On the other hand, Kinkel sought to make a mark for himself in his foreign policy competition with Rühe. Chancellor Kohl had still supported the U.S. position on a limited first round in talks with Clinton one month ahead of the summit. Now he sought the position of a mediator between the camps and between France and the U.S. in particular.[44]

The German interest in NATO enlargement is generally explained by both its strong institutional commitment to NATO and its geographical position at the Eastern border of the

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[43] Sharp 1997: 6; Taylor 1997: 221; "Major Backs Czechs in Alliance", International Herald Tribune, 19 April 1996; "Heftige Kritik an Clintons Plänen zur NATO-Erweiterung", Süddeutsche Zeitung, 14/15 June 1997.

[44] Weiser 1999: 130f; Interviews Kamp and Stephen Szabo; "Kinkel: Umfang der Ost-Erweiterung noch offen", Süddeutsche Zeitung, 7 July 1997, 1 and "Kohl und Clinton auf einer Linie", 7 June1997.

alliance (Eyal 1997: 703; Wolf 1996: 198-201). For Germany, NATO membership had been a central pillar of its military and political "Westbindung" and part of its raison d'état. It therefore advocated NATO enlargement both in order to forestall suspicions of a new German hegemonic sphere in Central Europe and in order to do for Central and Eastern Europe what NATO had done for Germany after World War II, that is to secure their liberal democratic development and to prevent traditional rivalries from resurfacing after the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact.[45]

Germany's location at the Eastern border of NATO and at the Western border of the CEE region gives rise to both positive and negative interdependence. On the one hand, Germany is by far the most important economic partner of the Central European countries. On the other hand, it would be most directly affected by negative developments in the region. Therefore, the German government regarded enlargement as an effective stabilization measure for the countries to its East and as a means to lose its "frontline status".[46] Moreover, enlargement promised to lead to a more equitable distribution of stabilization costs and would thus allow Germany to decrease its extremely high share of Western financial assistance to Central and Eastern Europe. In this regard, it is also obvious why Germany was satisfied with a limited enlargement round --- the Czech Republic and Poland are the two countries bordering on Germany in the East, and the three new members are by far Germany's most important economic partners in Central and Eastern Europe.

As far as the major European allies are concerned, this discussion shows that their initial enlargement preferences not only diverged but can also be attributed to distinctly national interests and attitudes. Therefore, institutional factors at the systemic level, like organizational habits and norms, cannot account for them. This finding once more contradicts the habitual and normative action hypotheses. Can we go beyond this negative finding and provide a positive explanation of the divergence? The best candidate for such an explanation seems to be "geopolitical location and interests". This explanation starts with the observation that, although the exact composition of new members was not sure until 1997, it had been clear all along that Poland and the Czech Republic would constitute the core of the enlargement area. It goes on to argue that countries located in the vicinity of these states, roughly the North-East of NATO, were more favorably disposed to enlargement in general than the others because vicinity gives rise to negative and positive interdependence and NATO enlargement promised

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[45] Kamp/Weilemann 1997: 1; Schmidt 1996: 219-221; Staack 1997: 274f

[46] Kamp/Weilemann 1997: 1,4; Latawski 1994: 42; Mihalka 1994: 7; Pradetto/Sigmund 1993: 892; Schmidt 1996: 213, 219.

to help them reduce the costs of negative interdependence and increase the benefits of positive interdependence. By contrast, those member states that were further removed from this region and, therefore, subject to low degrees of negative and positive interdependence, possessed little interest in institutional expansion. Rather, they feared that expansion would, first, reduce the efficiency of NATO (Britain), second, divert its attention and resources from their regions of primary interest (like the Mediterranean for Italy), or, third, shift the intra-organizational distribution of power in favor of other states (France). This is analysis is corroborated if we include other NATO member states (see Table 3).

Table 3 Enlargement Preferences of U.S. NATO Allies

	Limited Enlargement	**Inclusion of Romania and Slovenia**
Fast enlargement	**[USA] Germany**, Denmark, Netherlands, Norway	Belgium, Luxembourg
No fast enlargement	**Britain**, Iceland	**France, Italy**, Canada, Greece, Portugal, Spain, Turkey

At the Travemünde meeting of NATO defence ministers in October 1993, Rühe's attempt to push enlargement was supported by Belgium, the Netherlands, and Norway.[47] In addition, Denmark and Luxembourg declared themselves in favor of fast-track enlargement. Taken together these countries constitute the geographical "North-East" of NATO. By contrast, the Southern or Mediterranean member states (Greece, Portugal, Spain, Turkey in addition to France and Italy) as well as Canada are on the record as further "brakemen" (Broer 1997: 326). The Southern members also constituted the core of the coalition that favored a first round of enlargement including Slovenia and Romania, that is countries from the South of the CEE region. (Belgium, Canada and Luxembourg joined this Southern coalition). Denmark and Norway have advocated the membership of Baltic states but did not develop a strong interest in including far-away Romania and Slovenia.[48] In sum, this analysis strengthens the result of previous sections on the egoistic nature of actor preferences in the enlargement process.

[47] "Partnerschaft für den Frieden", FAZ 27 October 1993, 16.

[48] See Gallis 1997; Goldgeier 1999: 120 citing a New York Times report. See also Clemens 1997: 191; Weisser 1999: 129. According to Gallis 1997: 18, the Netherlands joined the Benelux neighbors in supporting an extended first round of enlargement.

9 The NATO Decision-Making Process

NATO's decision-making process on enlargement closely paralleled progress in the internal U.S. decision-making process and was mainly driven by U.S. initiatives. These observations indicate that U.S. leadership and bargaining power were of central importance for enlargement to materialize. In addition, however, the fact that enlargement corresponded with the organizational values and norms of NATO was used rhetorically by the proponents of enlargement, made it difficult for the reluctant member states to oppose enlargement, and helped to smoothen and accelerate the process.

The U.S. and NATO decision-making processes on enlargement proceeded conspicuously in parallel, with each step toward enlargement being first discussed and decided in the U.S. administration and then being implemented at the NATO level (Goldgeier 1999: 119). First, it was the U.S. administration that came up with the Partnership for Peace project in 1993. The thrust of this project, to deepen cooperation with the CEECs, including on military issues, and to declare the principled openness of NATO toward the accession of new members while avoiding a commitment to and preparation for enlargement in the near future, reflected the state of the interagency debate in the United States at that time. Just as the ambiguity of PfP made it possible for enlargement opponents and proponents in the U.S. administration to agree on this program, it also generated acceptance by both the "drivers" and the "brakemen" among the allies.

Second, NATO was instructed to prepare a "Study on NATO Enlargement" in December of 1994, after the interagency debate in the U.S. had been decided in favor of fast-track enlargement and after Lake and Holbrooke, in the second half of 1994, had instructed the U.S. bureaucracy to work out the details of enlargement. This shift in priorities did not reflect a shift in the preferences of the allies but resulted from the U.S. domestic decision to go ahead with enlargement. "Predictable grumbles followed from some Europeans about lack of consultation and American high-handedness." (Eyal 1997: 704) Even the German ambassador to NATO, von Richthofen, complained that "Washinton was riding roughshot over its allies, negotiating terms of possible membership with the Eastern Europeans and presenting NATO with accomplished facts instead of consulting with them" (quoted in Goldgeier 1999: 85). When the study was finished in September 1995, it built on the criteria for membership developed by Secretary of Defense Perry (the "Perry Principles") in early 1995. By emphasizing political criteria and downplaying military efficiency, it corresponded with the outlook of the fast-trackers (Goldgeier 1999: 95).

Third, it was not the North Atlantic Council but President Clinton in his 1996 reelection campaign who first announced that new members would be admitted at NATO's 50th anniversary in 1999. Finally, the U.S. administration decided to limit the number of new members to three. This corresponds to the decision NATO took at its Madrid summit in July 1997 in spite of the preference of a majority of European member states in favor of more new members.

The outcome of the NATO decision-making process is generally attributed to U.S. dominance in the Alliance. For three main reasons, its superior bargaining power persisted in the post-cold war area, although European dependence on the U.S. nuclear umbrella had significantly lessened due to the new security situation in Europe. First, of course, U.S. military guarantees were still needed in case Russian policy would change. Second, the inability and unwillingness of the Europeans to organize an autonomous military organization and their incapability of dealing successfully with the wars in former Yugoslavia had shown that they also needed U.S. military power to handle the new security problems in their neighborhood. Finally, U.S. involvement in European security was preferred by many member states to arrangements dominated by France and/or Germany. Under these circumstances, it is plausible to argue that the NATO allies followed American leadership for instrumental reasons. Faced with the ultimate choice of either accepting enlargement based on the U.S. timetable and selection of new members or risking to reduce the U.S. interest NATO and European security, the European allies went along with the Clinton administration.

Moreover, there is no evidence that the NATO bureaucracy played an autonomous role as a driving force of enlargement. Above all, this is due to the weakness of the NATO apparatus as a bureaucratic organization as compared, for instance, with the European Commission which is generally held to have acted as an important player in the process of EU enlargement (Sedelmeier/Wallace 1996). The different legal and actual power of both international administrations is even observable in the self-understanding of the staff: Whereas a member of the *cabinet* of former Commissioner Hans van den Broek who had been in charge of Eastern enlargement until 1999 described the role of the Commission in the enlargement process as one of "telling the states to tell the Commission what to do", members of NATO's staff illustrated their function as one of a "pen" or a "facilitator" for the member state governments: "Substance is not our role." NATO policies are developed in and approved by the member governments: "Capitals are the drivers." Usually, "one or a couple of allies take hold of an issue and work it out at home." "It is always a few strong countries or a strong country that try to build consensus and exercise leadership." NATO's international staff sees

its main role in faciliting this consensus-building by targeting the lowest common denominator and finding compromise formulas, either in written reports or through chairmanship in discussions among member countries. Thus, although Secretary General Wörner was an early advocate of NATO enlargement and solicited some tentative studies early on, the impetus for this policy did not come from the international staff (Interviews NATO International Staff).

Strategic action and bargaining effects do not constitute the whole story of NATO decision-making, however. Some features of the process are difficult to explain in a purely instrumental perspective. First, the U.S. (and German) advocates of NATO enlargement used norm-based arguments to justify and promote their cause. Second, despite clear material disincentives and a lack of interest in enlargement, no member state publicly declared that it was opposed in principle to enlargement. Opponents did not question the general openness of NATO to democratic, European states. It was not "Never!" but "Not now!" Third, the decision-making process on NATO enlargement went rather smoothly once the United States had taken the initiative. Despite misgivings about a lack of consultation, there is no evidence on hard-nosed bargaining on the part of the allies. Seeing that Clinton pursued enlargement for domestic purposes, had committed himself domestically to enlargement and therefore needed to be successful, the allies could have tried to extract concessions in exchange for consent, and the United States, in turn, could have issued threats about reducing their commitments in NATO and Europe. These process characteristics can be explained as the use and the effects of rhetorical action and shaming.

First, like their central and eastern European counterparts, the advocates of NATO enlargement in the West based their arguments on the constitutive values and norms of the Euro-Atlantic community. They framed NATO as a "community" organization and the candidates for membership as legitimate members of the "family" of European democratic nations. They defined the rationale of NATO enlargement as the promotion and protection of democracy and liberal norms of international conduct and warned that a failure to enlarge would constitute a violation of the member states' obligations as community and NATO members. The rhetorical character of these arguments is indicated by two observations: On the one hand, the proponents tended to emphasize the normative aspect of their enlargement advocacy and to downplay their egoistic interests. On the other hand, there are indications that they tailored their arguments to specific target groups.

Rühe's IISS speech referred to both egoistic, geostrategic and ideational motivations for enlargement. On the one hand, Rühe warned that "Germany alone cannot pay the bill for

reforms in the East" and function "as a *cordon sanitaire* for the rest of Europe". On the other hand, he emphasized, in line with the arguments of the CEECs the "shared values and common interests" of Europe and North America. "It is this, not the presence of an existential threat that is the hub of the Alliance." He further urged that "we must take full account of the vital security interests of our neighbours in the East and of the fact that these countries have always been members of the community of European nations." "Now that democracy has prevailed in Central and Eastern Europe, we must work together to close the gap in prosperity and security that exists between Eastern and Western Europe. We must not disappoint people in the East." (Rühe 1993: 130, 133-134). Later in the process, however, the egoistic security and financial interests were downplayed in the argumentation of Rühe and the defense ministry "because these arguments were problematic in the alliance as well as vis-à-vis Russia" (Interview Federal Ministry of Defense). Instead, they emphasized the value-based arguments of the IISS speech. In addition, Rühe argued that the democratic CEECs were entitled to membership according to the Washington Treaty. In their talks with other member states, Rühe and his collaborators framed enlargement as an issue of "survival" for NATO: Denying the CEECs their legitimate right to membership would destroy the alliance (Interviews Federal Ministry of Defense; Wolf 1996: 206).

Just as the German advocates downplayed their egoistic, strategic reasons for enlargement, U.S. proponents have strongly rejected allegations as to partisan domestic political considerations (Goldgeier 1999: 166). Moreover, they mirrored the arguments of the CEEC governments. Talbott's August 1995 article in the New York Review of Books („Why NATO should grow") set out the official rationale for enlargement --- democratic community and promotion of liberal norms --- that would be reiterated in the years to come (Talbott 1995: 27): First, "NATO should be open to the new democracies [...] that share common values, and that can advance the military and political goals of the Alliance" and, as Talbott would write later "aspire and deserve to be part of the trans-Atlantic community" (Talbott 1997). Second, the prospect of enlargement provides the CEECs "with additional incentives to strengthen their democratic and legal institutions". Third, it "can also foster [...] a greater willingness to resolve disputes peacefully and contribute to peace-keeping operations". Moreover the adovates of enlargement discredited criticism of enlargment by using negative historical analogies, for instance, when Clinton demanded in Budapest in 1994: "We must not allow the Iron Curtain to be replaced by a veil of indifference." (quoted in Goldgeier 1999: 88) And they used American support for and NATO membership of Western European countries as a positive historical analogy, as when Asmus named as "the goal" of NATO enlargement "to do

for Eastern Europe what was done for Western Europe --- create a security framework under which these countries can safely complete their transition to Western democratic societies" (Asmus 1996; see also Talbott 1995: 28).

Together with the rhetoric of the CEECs, this framing and this justification of enlargement had the effect of "rhetorically entrapping" the proponents as well as the opponents of enlargement in the West. For the proponents, one effect was to keep them on track. Even if they had advocated enlargement for purely selfish reasons, the public commitment to this policy and its justification as a moral and legal obligation would have made it difficult for them to retreat from this commitment at a later point in time and stop the enlargement process without losing face and political credibility. The other effect was to force them to be consistent. Even if the three central European candidates had been pushed for purely instrumental reasons (domestic politics in the case of the U.S., geopolitical strategy in the case of Germany), justifying their admission by general principles created a strong pressure to apply the same principles to other countries. For this reason, NATO had to declare that it was open in principle to any democratic European country "regardless of where it sits on the map" (Albright, see fn. 6).

By framing the policy of enlargement as a policy that was based on the fundamental values of NATO member states and on the membership norms of the alliance, the proponents of enlargement made it almost impossible for the opponents to openly oppose this policy.[49] First, they could not credibly question the values and norms on which the policy was based, for this would have meant to reject the very values and norms on which their own political authority rested and to unmask NATO's official self-understanding as insincere. Second, it was difficult to undermine the credibility of the proponents of NATO enlargement on the grounds of the alliance values and norms. Whereas it may have been possible to call into question the liberal-democratic credentials of, say, the Meciar or Iliescu governments in Slovakia and Romania, the reputation of presidents Havel and Walesa and the success in liberal-democratic transformation of the core candidate countries were beyond dispute. Neither could the opponents of enlargement credibly question the commitment of the United States or Germany to the values and norms of the alliance.[50] In the words of Stanley Sloan, a long-time observer of NATO affairs:

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[49] This effect is strongly emphasized by both proponents and skeptics (Interview Kamp) of enlargement.

[50] See Schimmelfennig forthcoming for a more detailed description of the effects of rhetorical action in enlargement decisions.

"Standing in the way of something that appeared to be logical in terms of the NATO Treaty and mandate I think would have been viewed as either a desire to maintain an old NATO that no longer was relevant or a lack of interest in the future of the alliance. Having the new democracies arguing so strongly on behalf of NATO and NATO membership, it would have been politically embarrassing for current members not to, in the end, take it very seriously, in spite of their concerns." (Interview Sloan)

The French government which purportedly criticized the push for enlargement vehemently behind the closed doors of the NATO Council, did not publicly reject the demands of the CEECs. The Central Europeans knew very well that France was opposed to NATO enlargement and began to publicly criticize the French government. The French government, in turn, felt vulnerable to accusations of a "new Yalta" and a repetition of the 1939 abandonment and did not want to be identified in the CEE region as the spearhead of opposition to enlargement (Interviews Gallis, Kamp). According to Gallis, it was more the moral pressure from Poland and other CEECs that silenced French opposition than any pressure from the United States (Interview Gallis). Moreover, at some point in the process, the French government realized that enlargement was irreversible and that it would become futile and too costly to continue to oppose it. If enlargement could not be prevented, "[w]hy, then, give Eastern European countries the feeling that France alone wanted to keep them out of the club?" (Boniface 1997: 5). The effects of rhetorical action, however, did not go so far as to *convince* the French government, i.e. to change its enlargement preferences (see also Chapter 12). According to Boniface (1996: 182; 1997: 5), French "reticence hardly gave way to enthusiasm" and "opposition continues to exist", but it was no longer expressed in public by French officials.

The same is true for Britain.[51] According to my interview partners, the Yalta analogy made a strong impact in Britain because Polish soldiers had fought for Britain in World War II and Britain was one of the powers responsible for "Yalta". In addition, the British government feared that opposition to enlargement might drive Germany out of the alliance and damage its special relationship with the United States. According to Admiral Weisser, the British government even went so far as to exploit the wavering position of the German government by communicating to the Polish government that the enlargement could be driven forward with British help if it was not for German reticence (1999: 68). These moves by the initial opponents are best understood as a policy of "cutting their losses", on the one hand, and of maintaining and enhancing the chances for successful coalition-building with the new members in an enlarged alliance, on the other.

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[51] Dannreuther 1997: 78; Sharp 1997: 4; Taylor 1996; Interviews British and German delegations to NATO.

Two other features of the enlargement process helped to keep it on track and to make it progress:

(1) *Incrementalism*: Enlargement did not consist in a one-shot decision but in a sequence of small steps beginning with PfP in 1994 and ending in the decision on the countries to be invited in 1997. Each of the intermediate decision steps was janus-faced. On the one hand, they served as "substitute acts" for immediate enlargement. Because of that, PfP was translated as "Partnership for Postponement" or "Partnership for Procrastination" by its critics. But also the Study on NATO Enlargement in 1995 and the individual dialogues with the candidate states of 1996 had an element of buying time and were easier to accept for the enlargement skeptics among the member states because they implied that the decision was not imminent and created the impression that enlargement may not actually take place anytime soon. On the other hand, however, with each step in the process, NATO committed itself more concretely to enlargement. The proponents of enlargement made sure that this commitment was at least verbally supported by all member states and documented in the relevant communiqués. And the substitute forms of cooperation also served to prepare NATO as well as the CEECs for eventual enlargement. As a result, it became increasingly difficult and costly to stop the process.

(2) *Action-forcing Events*: Finally, the enlargement process gained further momentum by two types of "action-forcing events" (Goldgeier 1999). On the one hand, NATO summits and the regular meetings of the North Atlantic Council triggered initiatives and decisions. For instance, the 1994 NATO summit put pressure on the new U.S. administration to demonstrate leadership and develop a NATO policy. The 50th anniversary of NATO in 1999 was a symbolic event that was well suited to admit the first members after the end of the Cold War. The regular meetings in between always served as occasions for the proponents of enlargement to call for the next step in the implementation of NATO enlargement.

On the other hand, visits to Central Europe served as action-forcing events. On these occasions, the leaders of Western countries stressed their satisfaction with the reforms in these countries, emphasized the community of values, and thus publicly committed themselves to the value foundation of the Western organizations. Moreover, they felt they had to address, and to be particularly reassuring on, the issue of NATO membership. In these situations, it would have been difficult for any opponent or skeptic to tell the CEECs that he or she was not interested in enlargement. Moreover, in the U.S. case, these visits were used by Lake to insert pro-enlargement language in the President's statements that went beyond the interagency compromise. Most prominently, the famous phrase that "the question is no longer whether

NATO will take on new members but when and how" had not been part of prepared Clinton's talking points for his visit to Prague in January 1994 but was added by Lake and his staff (Goldgeier 1999: 57; Interview Kupchan). Whereas the skeptics within the administration thought they could dismiss these statements as pure rhetoric, they were then by the policy entrepreneurs as evidence for the president's commitment to enlargement (Goldgeier 1999: 66, 69).

The major exception from the general observation of a smooth decision-making process without public controversy among the allies was the open conflict about the number of CEECs to be invited to join NATO in 1997. In the perspective of rhetorical action, this exception can be explained by the lack of normative determinacy in the selection of candidates. Whereas NATO enlargement as such and the qualification of the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland was clearly in line with NATO's values and norms and therefore was difficult to oppose, the sociological institutionalist analysis in chapter 2.4 has shown that the normative argument for limiting the number of new members to three was weak. For this reason, the U.S. proposal for a limited enlargement did not travel as smoothly.

10 The Process of Negotiation Between NATO and the CEECs[52]

In its negotiations with the CEEC candidates, NATO stuck to the value- and norm-based rationale for enlargement and emphasized the promotion of liberal norms. The concrete process, however, was generally determined by a strong NATO-CEEC asymmetry. Its superior bargaining power allowed NATO to set the conditions and the timetable for enlargement, to turn negotiations into teaching units, and to pursue a reactive and uncommitted policy of conditionality vis-à-vis the candidates. The CEEC candidates sought to keep up the moral pressure for enlargement by pointing to the promise of membership inherent in the NATO Treaty and in PfP and by doing everything to meet the membership conditions set by NATO.

Just as superior U.S. bargaining power in NATO, the superior bargaining power of NATO vis-à-vis the CEECs is the main key to the explanation of the process and the outcome of the negotiations between the alliance and the candidates for membership. This asymmetry affected the process in several ways.

(1) It was NATO alone that *set the conditions and the timetable for the accession* of the CEECs. The CEECs did not participate in concrete NATO decision-making on the terms of

[52] See Schimmelfennig 2000 for a general analysis of "international socialization" in the relations between Western organizations and the CEECs.

enlargement (for instance, the "Study on NATO Enlargement") but had to accept these terms if they wanted to become NATO members. As long as NATO was not ready for enlargement, the CEEC candidates had to make do with whatever terms of cooperation NATO offered them, be that NACC or PfP.

NATO, however, was bound by the alliance norms and the official justification for NATO enlargement in working out the details of the membership criteria. In its Study on NATO enlargement as well as in the talks with the candidate countries, the political requirements --- adherence to domestic and international liberal norms --- proved to be the "hard criteria", whereas financial contributions and military power and efficiency played only a secondary role and were formulated in much "softer" language. NATO merely required "the ability of prospective members to contribute militarily to collective defence and to the Alliance's new missions" (Study on NATO enlargement, §75) but did not specify any quality or quantity of military contributions. NATO further demanded no more than a financial contribution level "based, in a general way, on 'ability to pay'" (§65) --- which is fairly limited in the case of the CEECs.

(2) On the basis of its superior bargaining power, NATO could pursue *a policy of conditionality*. It used membership as a carrot to make CEECs adopt and follow NATO norms and policies and the denial of membership as a stick to punish those CEECs that failed to do so. At the NATO Ministerial Meeting in Sintra on 29 May 1997, secretary of state Albright openly formulated this policy: "We want to give the nations of Central and Eastern Europe an incentive to make the right choices about their future."[53] According to the proponents of enlargement, "that is exactly what the prospect of enlargement has done" (ibid.). Asmus (1996) concurs that the "prospect of NATO enlargement has already contributed enormously to reform and reconciliation in Eastern Europe. From the Baltic to the Black Sea, foreign and defense policies are being reconstructed in order to bring these countries into line with alliance norms." The various bilateral basic treaties between CEECs concluded to settle territorial disputes and ethnic minority conflicts are the most important foreign policy changes attributed to the conditions of membership explicitly stated by NATO. Among the domestic changes, the introduction of democratic and civilian control of the military can most clearly be linked to the prospect of NATO membership --- above all in Poland where it was long contested and had to be secured by the dismissal of the Polish chairman of the joint chiefs of staff in the spring of 1997.

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[53] See http://www.nato.int/usa/state/s970529a.htm, last visited 17 May 2000.

(3) Due to its superior bargaining power and the low degree of vulnerability to developments in central Europe, NATO could adopt *a low-cost policy of reactive and competitive reinforcement*. This is a policy of "take it or leave it": If states introduce and consolidate the domestic and foreign policy reforms NATO requires them to, they qualify for NATO membership. If they don't, they simply exclude themselves from the list of candidates for membership and nothing else follows.

The case of Slovakia is telling in this respect: Slovakia had been named together with its central European neighbors at the beginning of the process but then simply disappeared from the list of serious candidates as a result of the authoritarian domestic policies of the Meciar government. NATO consistently signaled the Slovak government that it would have to improve its democratic and human rights record at home in order to become a member but did not exert any direct pressure for change (Interview Korcok). In this situation, it was up to the Meciar government to weigh up the benefits of membership against the costs of adaptation. Obviously, domestic power considerations prevailed.

Moreover, NATO instigates competition among the candidates by offering the greatest chances of membership to those CEECs that outperform their neighbors. Thus, it is not only entirely up to the candidates to create the conditions under which they are rewarded but competition for a front position in the list of hopefuls will make the candidates increase their efforts at no higher cost for NATO. In the Study on NATO Enlargement, this strategy is aptly termed "self-differentiation":

"PfP activities and programmes are open to all partners, who themselves decide which opportunities to pursue and how intensively to work with the Alliance through the Partnership. This varying degree of participation is a key element of the self-differentiation process" (§38).

"The preparation of possible new members interested in joining NATO can be facilitated by an appropriate reinforcement and deepening of their Individual Partnership Programmes. Such a reinforcement and deepening is a key to self-differentiaton. Among other things, it would allow partners to distinguish themselves by demonstrating their capabilities and their commitment with a view to possible NATO membership." (§41)

Such a reactive approach is, of course, much less costly than a proactive policy in which NATO would either dedicate extensive resources to the initiation of reforms, exert direct pressure on the external states to adopt and retain community standards, or even directly intervene in the external state to transform its domestic institutions.

(4) NATO has sought to *avoid any self-binding effects of its policy of conditionality,* that is, whereas the CEECs had to fulfill NATO's requirements in order to be *eligible* for membership, they were not *entitled* to join after having met the requirements. Conditionality worked one way only. As much as the CEECs were bound by it, NATO wanted to keep its

options open. As one member of NATO's international staff strongly involved in the drafting of the Study pointed out to me, it was never conceived as a rigid checklist but was carefully designed to eschew any automaticity and to preserve the primacy of political decisions by the heads of government. The allies did not want to produce any irresistible momentum (Interview NATO International Staff). According to this staff member, Paragraph 7 of the Study was the single most important one:

"7. Decisions on enlargement will be for NATO itself. [...] There is no fixed or rigid list of criteria for inviting new member states to join the Alliance. Enlargement will be decided on a case-by-case basis and some nations may attain membership before others. [...] Ultimately, Allies will decide by consensus whether to invite each new member to join according to their judgment of whether doing so will contribute to security and stability in the North Atlantic area at the time such a decision is to be made. [...]"

(5) The negotiations between NATO and the CEEC candidates were no negotiations in the traditional sense of bargaining about the possibility and the terms of an agreement but rather resembled *teaching units*. The terms of the agreement were set by NATO and the talks between the alliance and the aspiring countries rather served to signal the candidates what reforms NATO expected of them and to find out to what extent the candidates were able and willing to meet these expectations. The format was "Questions & Answers" rather than the exchange of threats and promises. Again, however, NATO was cautious in these talks not to give any specific advice in order to avoid automaticity (Interviews NATO International Staff). Finally, the accession talks with the three invited CEECs proved to be a short and unidirectional affair. As the candidates did not want to risk anything at this point, they agreed to everything NATO demanded of them, e.g., in terms of financial contributions, safety of information, and a commitment to future enlargement rounds (Interviews Member of CEEC Delegation to NATO and NATO International Staff).

The CEEC candidates in turn tried to make the best of the asymmetrical character of their interaction with NATO and followed a two-pronged strategy based on the ambiguous character of Partnership for Peace (Interview Member of CEEC Delegation to NATO). On the one hand, they took the vague promise of membership contained in PfP at face value and kept up the public, moral pressure on NATO in order to put this promise into action. In the drastic words of Polish Ambassador to the United States Rey, they sought to "embarrass the living daylights out of the United States and the West to gain admission to NATO" (Grayson 1999: 158). According to a member of a CEEC delegation to NATO, CEEC officials kept on at "pestering NATO" with demands for membership "constantly, at all intergovernmental meetings at every level", implying that "we will make your life impossible if you don't admit us" (Interview Member of CEEC Delegation to NATO).

On the other hand, however, they were willing to make the most of the cooperation and chances for self-differentiation that PfP offered them. According to one member of a CEEC delegation to NATO, PfP was mainly an instrument for membership aspirations. "Its beauty was self-differentiation", otherwise it would not have been of any great interest. Self-differentation gave the CEECs the opportunity to persuade the West of the credibility of their commitment to NATO (Interview Member of CEEC Delegation to NATO). By keeping up the moral pressure and studiously fulfilling NATO's requirements, the CEECs hoped to maximize their chances for admission.

In the latter respect, however, the CEEC delegations were rather disappointed by the little guidance they received during their "individual dialogue" with NATO. Their interest in obtaining clear targets and concrete guidelines in order to prepare efficiently for admission ran counter NATO's strategy to avoid offering detailed and clearcut criteria for membership.[54] However, the various rounds of the Individual Dialogue gave the candidate delegations the necessary clues on how they could improve their chances for accession. As one member of a CEEC delegation described it, the delegation first analyzed the dialogue and identified several areas in which its home country did not conform to standards. These points were then transmitted to the capital where the government tasked the ministries to analyze the situation and created a government committee that served as a coordinating body for the adaptation process (Interview Member of CEEC Delegation to NATO).

Whereas it is obvious that the negotiations between NATO and the CEECs were a far cry from the characteristics of communicative action, they showed traits of both rhetorical and strategic action --- just as it had been the case in the intra-NATO process. Both the CEECs and NATO used the alliance norms strategically, the CEECs in order to make the alliance stick to and implement its membership promise and NATO members by following a low-cost and reactive approach to spreading its norms in central and eastern Europe and by avoiding to tie their hands ahead of the ultimate decision on membership. In general, however, the course and the outcome of the negotiations was determined by the glaring asymmetry in bargaining power between NATO and the CEECs. There is nothing in the outcome of the negotiations

[54] Interviews Members of CEEC Delegations to NATO. One CEEC delegation member indicated, however, that different strategic incentives were only one reason of the different approaches to the negotiations. The other source of CEEC dissatisfaction in the beginning was that the CEECs first had to learn that "NATO was different from the Warsaw Pact", that they were "treated as 'grown-ups'" in NATO and that NATO expected them "to make their own decisions".

that could not have been expected on the basis of the preferences and the power of the negotiating parties.

11 The U.S. Ratification Process

After the accession protocols with the three CEECs had been signed, they had to be ratified by all member states. Apart from the fact that Turkey for some time threatened to block NATO enlargement if it was not recognized as a candidate for membership in the EU, ratification was generally expected to be non-controversial once the U.S. Senate had approved of enlargement. I will therefore focus on the U.S. ratification process.

At first sight, it seemed that the ratification of NATO enlargement in the Senate would not be in danger. NATO enlargement had not only been advocated by the Democratic administration but also been pushed by the Republican majority in Congress. Moreover, legislation related to NATO enlargement had always attracted large majorities in favor. The administration, however, did not trust these signs and lean back. It feared that the process might get caught in domestic, partisan politics or fall victim to post-Cold War isolationist tendencies. And it wanted a vote that would demonstrate broad support for enlargement with no strings attached.

In order to achieve these goals, the administration decided not to rely on existing bureaucratic structures but to create a special agency, the NATO Enlargement Ratification Office (NERO), to orchestrate the ratification campaign. NERO not only worked out the administration's strategy to address and deflect any concerns Senators might have about NATO enlargement but also to reach out to the constituencies of the Senators and to the major interest groups in society. The goal was to build up pressure from below in favor of enlargement and to prevent organized opposition against it. NERO's efforts were complemented by the U.S. Committee to Expand NATO (USCEN), a non-profit organization founded and presided over by Bruce Jackson, a conservative Republican and a Director of Strategic Planning at the Lockheed Martin Corporation, "to save the Clinton administration from defeat in the ratification debate" (Interview Jackson). The Committee united experienced national campaigners from both parties who were in favor of NATO enlargement for different reasons. It mainly targeted Senators and elite opinion at Washington dinner parties. The activities of both organizations are most accurately described as rhetorical action, the strategic use of arguments in order to successfully carry through a pre-fixed policy.[55]

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[55] The activities of NERO and USCEN are described in Goldgeier 1999 and Grayson 1999. In addition, my findings are based on interviews with Jackson and Munter.

Generally, the campaigners tailored their arguments to particular audiences in order to address their most important concerns and to apply moral and social pressure where they were most vulnerable. The basic decision NERO had to make was whether to target the conservative or liberal critics of enlargement. After they had agreed that Republican support was more critical to success than that of the Democratic Left, and that Senator Jesse Helms was the crucial person to win over, the argumentative strategy for discussion with the Senate switched from from framing NATO as a "community organization" with a focus on the promotion of democracy to framing NATO as an "organization of collective defense" with a focus on "military efficiency". At the Senate hearings, for instance, Secretary of State Albright sought to assure the Senators that enlargement would not dilute NATO's military efficiency, that the NATO-Russia Founding Act would not give Russia a say in NATO's decision-making, and that the costs of enlargement would be small and evenly distributed among the allies (Goldgeier 1999: 124-128; Grayson 1999: 120).

Further examples of target-specific argumentation abound: Veterans were assured of NATO's military efficiency. In order to put moral pressure on labor, President Walesa wrote a letter to AFL-CIO chief Sweeney reminding him of the labor's long-standing support for Solidarity. To assuage Jewish concerns about potential Polish anti-semitism, it was argued that support for Polish democracy through NATO enlargement was the best prevention (Goldgeier 1999: 134). USCEN warned Republicans who wanted to hit Clinton by opposing enlargement that "by doing so they would have hit Reagan" who would have been strongly in favor (Interview Jackson). The Committee further gained the backing of the Christian Coalition "on the basis that NATO enlargement broadened and strengthened the community of shared Western values" (Grayson 1999: 158). At every dinner organized by USCEN, the proponents of enlargement came from different communities in order to make sure that a variety of particular concerns were addressed and that NATO enlargement could not be identified as the "pet issue" of a specific community (Interview Jackson).

Besides these specific arguments targeted at particular audiences and their concerns, the general themes of the campaign were the community of values and the collective identity with the central European candidates as well as the moral and historical obligation of the West to the countries. In Jackon's words, "What was selling was the values." (Interview) These themes were not only developed in the abstract but also personified. To demonstrate the existence of "community" and strengthen the idea of collective identity, the campaigners called up the central European embassies to send them good "communicators" (Interview Jackson) and then brought along central European officials and intellectuals who "were cosmopolitan, well

dressed, and fluent in English" (Goldgeier 1999: 134). According to Jackson, officials like Geremek (Polish parliament) or Czech President Havel were the best witnesses and able to really persuade Senators (Interview Jackson). And in order to personify moral and historical obligation, the campaigners brought in Poles who had participated in the battle of Normandy and Americans who had fought together with them (Interview Munter; Grayson 1999: 109-112).

According to the campaigners, the strategic advantages of framing the issue as one of constitutive values, first principles, and high moral stakes were manifold. First, in a strategy memorandum prepared by Rosner, head of NERO, one central element was to "define the issue in the broadest terms, and with the highest stakes" because "the broader the lens and the higher the stakes, the stronger the President's hand on the Hill" (quoted in Grayson 1999: 114). The "pro-expansionists' continual stress on the West's moral obligation to Central Europe --- for example, lawmakers responded to the theme of Poland's 'betrayal' at Yalta --- cast the debate as one that transcended petty politics" (Grayson 1999: 125). It not only made it difficult for Republican Senators to deal with enlargement in a partisan perspective but also to attach other issues, like material gratifications for their states, to this "historical" decision.

Second, the "community of liberal values" theme was a unifying one. On the one hand, it could be specifically tailored in detail to address the concens of many groups (see above the examples of the Jewish community, the Christian fundamentalists, and organized labor). Most importantly, however, it was a theme that could not be identified with a single community (as, for instance, arguments that only appealed to Americans of central European descent). Rather, it addressed the values that were constitutive for American society (or any Western, democratic society, for that matter) as a whole. Or in Jackson's campaigner's way of putting it: "With the values, you could get all kinds of Americans to call their Senators." (Interview Jackson). "By stressing symbols and goals that unified rather than divided --- 'democracy', 'Yalta betrayal', 'integration of the West' --- pro-expansionists rallied to their cause Big Business and Big Labor, Biden-style liberals and Helms-style conservatives, and Jewish and Polish groups." (Grayson 1999: 211).

Third, and relatedly, because the "community of liberal values" theme was basic to the collective identity of American society, it silenced any explicit opposition. To frame NATO as the military organization of a community of shared values and to describe its purpose as the defense of this community of values, was the "K.O. punch" (Interview Jackson). Thus, rhetorical action worked with skeptical Senators and interest groups in basically the same way as it had with skeptical member governments (Interview Sloan).

12 The Aftermath of the First Round and Prospects for a Second Round

According to the available evidence as well as to the opinion of observers, the second round of enlargement will not be an automatic follow-up of the first round but will depend on a similar set of factors and conditions as the first round.

The strategic and rhetorical process quality of the past enlargement round is revealed by the fact that there has not been a thorough change in enlargement preferences on the part of the NATO member states. The enlargement skeptics of the first round have not become enlargement supporters in the second round. In all likelihood, European member governments will not take the initiative for a second round of enlargement. Moreover, it seems that Germany will not even be an internally split and half-hearted proponent this time.

Already at the Madrid summit of 1997, Germany had reservations about a too strong wording of the final communique on the membership prospects for Romania and Slovenia as well as the Baltic states. In 1999, it was as skeptical towards the Membership Action Plan proposed by the U.S. administration as the other European allies (Interview Federal Defense Ministry). It is typical for the cautious and reluctant attitude of the German government that Chancellor Schröder, during his visit to the Baltic states in June 2000, strongly supported their accession to the EU but did not commit himself to their admission to NATO. A few weeks later, Walter Kolbow, the state secretary in the Federal Ministry of Defense Kolbow, reaffirmed in Tallinn that Russian consent was needed before NATO could expand further.[56] The explanation for this preference is straightforward: Now that Germany borders on NATO members in the East, it has lost its frontline status, and its main economic partners in the CEE region are members of NATO, its concerns about instability at its Eastern border have been dispelled and concern about Russia looms even larger than before. In this situation, it advocates EU membership as a less controversial "consolation prize" to the CEECs outside NATO. Conversely, the new members that now constitute the Eastern "frontline" of NATO are the most openly in favor of further enlargement. Following the pattern of the old members during the first round, they focus on their immediate neighbors, e.g. Slovakia for the Czech Republic and the Baltic countries for Poland (Interviews with members of CEEC delegations to NATO).

Under these circumstances, American initiative and pressure will be of crucial importance for a second round of NATO enlargement. The Clinton administration's rationale for proposing a limited first round was to make a second round more likely. By temporarily

closing the door to most CEEC candidates, the administration hoped, first, to keep up the pressure for a second round and, second, to avoid that the Baltic countries would be the only credible candidates remaining. Selecting, for instance, Slovenia and Romania as well as Slovakia and Bulgaria for the second round would keep the process of NATO expansion going while putting off the conflict with Russia about the Baltic states. However, there seems to be large agreement among the observers of NATO enlargement that enthusiasm for a second round has strongly weakened during Clinton's second term, and that the second round will not be easier to achieve than the first one (Goldgeier 1999: 172; Grayson 1999: 212; Interviews Jackson, Munter).

First, the key policy entrepreneur for enlargement in the Clinton administration, National Security Adviser Lake, had already left his post before the first round was completed. Second, the amendment by Senator Warner proposing a three-year pause before future enlargement rounds came within 10 votes of succeeding and signaled that Senate support for a quick follow-up to the 1999 enlargement was weak. Both factors contributed to the decision of the Clinton administration to leave the decision on future enlargement to the next administration. In that regard, the Membership Action Plan --- as usually proposed by the U.S. --- accepted by NATO at the Washington summit in 1999, fulfills a similar function as PfP had five years before. It contributes to preparing the candidates for membership and signals NATO's general commitment to the "open door" but offers no concrete perspective for accession.

There are further inhibiting factors on the part of the current candidates. Most importantly, no other CEEC candidate is as strong as Poland has been in the campaign for the first round of enlargement. First, the domestic and election politics aspect of enlargement will probably be much reduced in the future.[57] Americans of Polish descent by far the largest and most compact and well-organized group of Americans with central and eastern European roots. No other "CEE vote" is as important as the "Polish vote", and it is doubtful that voters with personal ties to the three new members will feel as strongly about the NATO membership of other CEECs. Second, the other CEECs lack leaders that could personify resistance to communism and democratic community as forcefully as Presidents Walesa and Havel. In addition to diminshed electoral and rhetorical power, the fact that most of the other candidates are closer to the crisis spots of Eastern Europe, less consolidated democracies, and less wealthy than the three new members will probably amplify concerns about alliance cohesion and efficiency as well as the security and financial costs of enlargement. In sum, a

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[56] RFE/RL Newsline 4, 8 June 2000 and 20 June 2000.

[57] See "Suche nach Schubkraft", FAZ, 5 May 2000, 12.

future round of enlargement will not only depend on committed policy entrepreneurs with presidential backing in the next administration but also on either a "critical mass" of credible candidates or an "anchor" to which weaker candidates could be tied. For instance, if the Western neutrals (Austria, Finland, Sweden) signaled their interest in membership, they could bring neighboring CEECs along (Interviews Jackson, Munter)

A good illustrative case is the initiative developed by Stanley Sloan (Congressional Research Service) for Senator Roth (Republican, Delaware) that the Washington summit of 1999 should issue an invitation to Slovenia (Interviews Brzezinski, Sloan). The rationale for this initiative was that NATO should send a strong signal to Russia as well as to the remaining CEEC candidates that the enlargement process will continue. The motto was, "Pace, don't pause!" Sloan chose Slovenia because it had been the "Why not-country" at the Madrid summit: Its political and economic record of transformation to liberal democracy was first-rate, it had received strong support among the European allies, its membership would encourage the countries of the Balkans, and the risks of Slovenian membership were negligible. The strategy to push this initiative was one of rhetorical action: By showing that Slovenia fulfilled the criteria of membership listed in the Study on NATO Enlargement as well as or even better than the three new and some of the older members, the initiative was to point at the administration's and NATO's inconsistency and thus to exert moral pressure to invite Slovenia. According to Sloan, however, the administration declined to go along, first, because it was concerned about the Warner amendment and, second, because it was skeptical about inviting Slovenia by itself and bringing about a big ratification effort for just one country (Interview Sloan). This episode shows that "practical issues got in the way of politics" (Interview Sloan). In other words, not even a combination of value community, organizational norms, established practice and argumentative pressure is sufficient to keep the enlargement process going.

Other factors that proved relevant in the first round of enlargement are more encouraging to the remaining CEEC candidates. First, liberal democracy has been further consolidated in many candidate states. Croatia and Slovakia have liberated themselves from governments with authoritarian tendencies, and the treatment of the Russian minority has markedly improved in Estonia and Latvia. For these reasons, it will be more difficult to reject the applications of the CEECs on normative grounds.

Second, the CEECs continue to exert argumentative pressure on NATO by using the same arguments as the successful new members. To quote a few recent examples, Slovak foreign minister Kukan responded to U.S. criticism of Slovak military combat readiness that Slovak

preparations were "unavoidably accompanied by technical problems, but we must not forget that the aim of the alliance is above all the protection and implementation of certain [democratic] values."[58] And when Estonian President visited Washington in June 2000 to mark the 50th anniversary of the Baltic states' incorporation into the Soviet Union and to advocate a "big bang" second round of enlargement in 2002 including all remaining applicants, he appealed to historical obligation by noting that the had U.S. formally refused to recognize Moscow's sovereignty over the three countries. "He said this gave Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians the moral support to maintain their identities throughout Soviet domination and eventually to regain their independence."[59]

Third, the remaining applicants can use the Membership Action Program (MAP) in the same way as PfP had been used by the new members, i.e. by constantly invoking the membership perspective inherent in this program and by demonstrating a strong commitment to and preparation for accession to NATO. Incidentally, the candidate states like MAP much more than PfP because it offers stronger guidance and better feedback to the candidates (Interviews Bajarunas, Rotaru, Istvan Szabo, NATO International Staff), whereas some member states fear that this stronger involvement could create problems for future alliance decisions (Interview NATO International Staff).

Prior commitments and action-forcing events also seem to push forward a second round of enlargement to some extent. The promise of the Madrid summit to keep the door open and the explicit reference to Romania, Slovenia, and the Baltic countries set a precedent which NATO cannot ignore without risiking to lose credibility. Indeed, the "open door" has been invoked ceremonially at virtually every ministerial meeting of NATO ever since even if nothing else was done to implement this policy. The Madrid promise created a pressure on NATO "to deliver something" to the remaining candidates at the Washington Summit of 1999, and so MAP was established and 2002 was set as a date for review of NATO's enlargement project. Thus, the action-forcing event of 1999 forced action that engendered yet another action-forcing event in 2002, and the candidates, at their May 2000 meeting in Vilnius, already began to increase the pressure on NATO to keep its promises. It is highly doubtful, however, that these favorable conditions would be sufficient to bring about a second round of enlargement in the absence of U.S. leadership and bargaining power.

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[58] RFE/RL Newsline 4, 20 June 2000.

[59] Andrew F. Tully, "Estonia's President Presses for 'Big Bang' NATO Expansion", RFE/RL Newsline 4, 19 June 2000

In sum, the hypotheses of habitual, normative, and communicative action do not appear to carry more explanatory weight for the enlargement process after the first round than they did before. This is although the conditions are more favorable since the first round has established a set of schemes and practices in support of further enlargement. Since, however, these schemes and practices have not been internalized by the major actors in NATO, it seems that the second round will have to start from an unfavorable constellation of country-specific, selfish, geostrategic interests. It will again need a policy entrepreneur to "mobilize" the constitutive values and norms as well as past promises and practices in order to put social pressure on the reluctant majority of member states and their indifferent societies. And, as the analysis of the first round of enlargement has demonstrated, a combination of idea-based entrepreneurship with political interest and bargaining power would be of great help. As things stand, the prospects for a second round will depend on the initiative of the next U.S. administration and its ability to forge a new bi-partisan and bi-branch coalition. Just as NATO's 1994 Brussels summit had been the "action-forcing event" (Goldgeier) for the Clinton administration to develop a policy on NATO enlargement, the NATO summit of 2002 could provide the action-forcing event for the new Bush or Gore administration and its NATO policy. And of course, the Western ability to find an agreement with the new Russian government under President Putin will be a major factor.

13 Conclusion

The argument in this report on NATO's collective decision-making process on enlargement started with the puzzle that system-level, rationalist alliance theories do not convincingly explain why NATO expanded to the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland. A correlational account based on a sociological institutionalist "liberal community hypothesis" was largely corroborated by the evidence but begged the question of *how*, through which process mechanisms, the alliance values and norms influenced the decision-making process and produced this outcome. In order to answer this question, I specified five process hypotheses, based on different logics of action, and their implications for the NATO enlargement process.

The analysis of the initial stages of the process quickly resulted in failure for the two process hypotheses most closely associated with sociological institutionalism --- habitual action and normative action. In contrast to the implications of both perspectives, the preference for enlargement was neither an immediate or automatic nor a uniform consequence, for either the West or the East, of the end of the cold war and the liberal democratic transformation of central and eastern Europe. Alliance norms did not impact on

the outcome of NATO enlargement at the level of individual motivations and preferences. The CEECs' bid to join NATO resulted from strategic adaptation to the fact that the CSCE, their first choice for security provision, proved to be an inefficient instrument for achieving this goal and that NATO membership appeared to be the most efficient way to security in the post-cold war situation. NATO not only rejected the CEECs' membership bid initially but member states were also divided on the desirability of NATO enlargement and, later, on the selection of new members. Rather than organizational habits and norms, selfish national interests based on geopolitical location and outlook account for the enlargement preferences of most allies. Thus, although sociological institutionalism provided a satisfying correlational explanation of NATO enlargement, the observable process did not correspond to sociological institutionalist expectations --- thereby demonstrating the value of process-tracing as an additional explanatory strategy and as a check on correlational analysis. How, then, did the alliance identity and norms affect the enlargement outcome if it was not through habitualization or internalization? Or is the correspondence between alliance identity and norms, on the one hand, and enlargement and the selection of new members, on the other, pure coincidence?

The observation of divergent and mainly egoistic preferences is compatible with the remaining three logics of action --- communicative, rhetorical, and strategic action. These three logics do not presuppose that the institutional impact of alliance norms occurs at the level of individual preferences but two of them --- communicative and rhetorical action --- hypothesize that they will influence the course or the outcome of the process of decision-making.

The main characteristics of the collective decision-making process, however, contradict the implications of communicative action. First, the argumentative behavior of the CEECs' advocates was a far cry from truth-seeking and consensus-oriented deliberation but showed strong indications of a self-serving, strategic, and opportunistic use of arguments. Second, both NATO's decision-making and its negotiations with the CEECs were characterized by strong power asymmetries. There are no indications that communication was structured in a way that disproportionately empowered the weaker actors (Risse 2000: 18f). Rather, the agenda was set and the outcome was determined by the most powerful actors. Third, the process of argumentation did not have constitutive effects and did not result in a genuine consensus. The major enlargement skeptics within the U.S. bureaucracy and among the NATO allies were not really convinced that enlargement (or its limitation to the three central European countries) was good policy. Moreover, in the aftermath of the first round, the

constellation of and motivation for enlargement preferences seems to be the same as it was at the beginning of the collective decision-making process.

These features of the process of argumentation fit the hypothesis of rhetorical action much better. According to this process logic, the story starts with how CEEC leaders and their Western supporters framed NATO as an organization of the liberal, Euro-Atlantic community of states, the democratic CEECs as legitimate members of this community, and enlargement as a policy that was imperative in the light of NATO's constitutive norms, historical mission, and past promises and practices. As members of the liberal, Euro-Atlantic community who shared these constitutive norms and had participated in and benefited from NATO's mission as well as its past promises and practices, the opponents and skeptics of enlargement within the alliance could not openly oppose and block enlargement either without experiencing genuine cognitive dissonance and shame or without risking to reveal a hypocritical, self-serving attitude toward the alliance's norms and mission and to lose their credibility and reputation as members of the community in good standing.

Therefore, once some members of the alliance actively promoted enlargement, the reticent members could only engage in delaying tactics, raising additional, legitimate concerns (like the Russian attitude or the stability of democracy in the CEECs), or making the best of enlargement (by, for instance, pushing their "pet" candidates). Once the additional legitimate concerns were dealt with successfully (for instance, by the NATO-Russia agreements), the way to enlargement was free. In the interaction between NATO and the CEECs, NATO used the alliance norms strategically by subjecting the CEECs to a policy of conditionality while seeking to keep its own options as open as possible. The CEECs, in turn, used the alliance norms to oblige NATO to stick to its membership promise. Furthermore, they sought to find out exactly which normative requirements they had to fulfill in order to take the most efficient route to membership. Finally, enlargement was ratified in the U.S. Senate by a large majority thanks to the skillful rhetorical action of NERO and USCNE. In this account, the alliance identity and norms had the effect of silencing egoistic opposition to enlargement and shaming reluctant member states into compliance despite the fact that the CEECs possessed inferior bargaining power and their supporters in the West were a clear minority.in the U.S. and in the alliance.

Although there is evidence for rhetorical action in every analytical episode of the enlargement process, this account is neither fully convincing nor the only plausible account. On the one hand, rhetorical action does not seem to have been a sufficient condition of enlargement. First, it is not clear whether Clinton, Lake, and Rühe became proponents of

enlargement as a result of their meetings and discussions with CEEC officials (and maybe some special responsiveness to their cause) or whether they embraced the enlargement project because it fit their domestic political ambitions. More importantly, if the power of the CEEC arguments had really been that strong, it should have persuaded the reluctant majority of Western leaders as well because all of them shared the same liberal identity and were part of the Euro-Atlantic community to which the CEEC leaders appealed. Yet, neither did the arguments of the CEEC leaders create general Western support for enlargement nor were the norm-based arguments of the supporters of enlargement in the West sufficient to persuade even their own governments and bureaucracies. Whereas Rühe remained isolated in the German government, Clinton, Lake, and Holbrooke ultimately had to threaten the opponents with the supreme authority of the president. It was only when enlargement had become official U.S. policy and was actively pushed by the U.S. administration that the other NATO member states went along with it.

In the perspective of strategic action, then, the story of enlargement would be one of the multiple uses and effects of superior (bargaining) power. First, the proponents of enlargement in the U.S. administration used presidential authority to impose this policy on the skeptical majority of the bureaucracy. Then, the U.S. used its preponderance within the alliance to impose its preference for a fast enlargement, its own timetable, and its own choice of new members on the majority of the other member states. Finally, NATO used its dominant power vis-à-vis the CEECs to structure the negotiations according to its own preferences and to impose its membership conditions and accession timetable on the candidate countries. In this account, the alliance identity and norms had no independent effect on the enlargement outcome but simply happened to be in line with the preferences of the most powerful actor(s). If that was the case, the analysis of process would not only have shown the failure of sociological institutionalist hypotheses about how norms affect collective outcomes but also have revealed that the correlation between alliance norms and enlargement outcome was merely coincidental. To be sure, this result would not support system-level, rationalist alliance theory but point to a liberal, domestic politics argument.

However, the hypothesis of strategic action does not provide a full account of the enlargement process either. First, it does not explain why arguing was such a persistent feature of the process and, in particular, why not only the weaker but also the most powerful actors used value- and norm-based arguments. Second and conversely, why do we have so little evidence of explicit threat-based bargaining? Third, rhetorical action appears to have been effective in the case of Senate ratification in which the structure was not hierarchical or

asymmetrical but one of "checks and balances". Finally, why did the process produce an outcome that corresponded with the alliance norms if it was entirely driven by superior bargaining power?

The response from a power-based vantage point could be that, first, the most powerful actors used community-oriented and norm-based arguments strategically to cover up their self-interest and their bargaining power and thereby make it easier for the opponents to give in and comply. Second, U.S. power in NATO and NATO power vis-à-vis the CEECs was so overwhelming and self-evident that it was not even necessary to issue threats to make the other member states and the CEECs comply. Third, one could point out that earlier Senate votes had consistently shown strong support for enlargement so that Senatorial consent was not really doubtful from the beginning. Fourth, the apparently norm-conforming outcome may well have been a coincidental consequence of the fact that the initial preferences of the enlargement advocates happened to correspond with alliance norms. In this perspective, the community identity and the alliance norms may have had a reinforcing, facilitating, and smoothening effect on the decision-making process but were not crucial in bringing about NATO enlargement.

Ultimately, the decisive question is of a counterfactual nature: Would the enlargement outcome have been the same if the membership of the CEECs had not been backed by the hierarchical power of the Clinton administration in the U.S. and the dominance of the U.S. in NATO? Would rhetorical action have brought about the same result? Conversely, would pure bargaining power have produced the same enlargement outcome if the actors had not engaged in rhetorical action? The evidence from the NATO enlargement process alone seems to be in favor of the power-based explanation because it could be shown that rhetorical action alone did not persuaded the opponents of fast-track enlargement either in the U.S. administration or in the German government, or in NATO.

A look at other cases, however, raises doubts as to whether this is the final verdict. First, we may look at cases of NATO decision-making in which norm-based and power-based policies were in tension or contradiction. Risse-Kappen (1995b) showed in his analysis of alliance decisions in Cold War crises, the allies had been able to exert considerable influence on American foreign policy in spite of superior U.S. power --- under the condition that the European and Canadian preferences and concerns were in line with the alliance norms. Thus, it may well be that U.S. pressure for NATO enlargement was so effective only because it was in line with alliance identity and norms whereas the preferences of the opponents were not. In

the light of these cases, superior U.S. power does not seem to have been a *sufficient* condition for the enlargement outcome.

Second, we may look at the parallel enlargement decisions of organizations without such an asymmetrical intra-organizational structure. A suitable case is EU eastern enlargement. In this case, there is also abundant evidence of rhetorical action by the proponents of enlargement. By contrast, however, the proponents (above all, Germany and Britain) did not possess superior bargaining power within the organization. Therefore, we can conclude with greater confidence that the enlargement outcome was a result of rhetorical action and shaming, indeed (Schimmelfennig forthcoming). Thus, a comparison with EU enlargement to the same region indicates that the superior bargaining power of the United States was no *necessary* condition for NATO enlargement either.

In sum, then, the analysis of NATO's collective decision-making process on enlargement produced sufficient evidence to reject the logics of appropriateness and arguing (as defined by Risse 2000) as processual explanations of the enlargement outcome. It did not produce conclusive evidence, however, for a definite choice between the two consequentialist hypotheses of rhetorical and strategic action. That the CEEC advocates of enlargement "talked it into our heads for so long that we could not do otherwise", as one U.S. Senator allegedly told Czech deputy foreign minister Vondra in Madrid, most probably is an at least partially adequate description of how NATO enlargement came about. It may as well have been a friendly understatement by a representative of the most powerful nation in NATO.

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1 Washington, D.C., 19 February - 5 March 1999

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2 Bonn, 27-28 April 1999

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3 Brussels, 17-21 May 1999

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