

‘Keeping the Russians out, the  
Balkans quiet, and Brussels on top’

*A Case Study of the Security Dimension of the  
EU Enlargement to Bulgaria of 2007*

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# **'Keeping the Russians out, the Balkans quiet, and Brussels on top'**

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*To my grandfather,  
Birger Olai Lund.  
9.11.1926 – 4.9.2008*



# Abstract

The Eastern enlargement of the European Union to former communist dictatorships has seen scholarly interest from several disciplines of theoretical schools. The security implications of EU enlargement to the East has seen theoretical disagreement, as there are arguments that EU enlargement both worsens the security situation for the current EU members, and that security is an insufficient cause for explaining enlargement to the former communist countries. On the other hand, security is one of the most cited motivations for enlargement policy by scholars, EU officials and politicians. Thus, the security dimension of EU enlargement is unclear in terms of *why* it matters and *how* it matters. This project investigates the security dimension in EU enlargement through a case study of one of the latest additions to the Union, namely Bulgaria, and the empirical analysis of data acquired through in-depth interviews.

The analysis finds that the Union utilized enlargement for security purposes, following two distinct logics: one of *realpolitik* and geopolitical considerations, and one of *democratic peace* and the extension of the *security community*. There were evident security gains for member states that were decisive in their decision to enlarge to Bulgaria, both through exporting democratic governance, norms and values, as well as the establishment of many-sided economic relations between Bulgaria and the Community, but also the presence of long-term geopolitical, security-political and strategic interests, such as the containment of Russian influence in Bulgaria, fighting transnational threats to internal security, energy security and regional stability, to name a few. The Union acted strategically in both the decision and in the execution of the enlargement strategy towards Bulgaria, taking risks and undermining reform efforts when needed, in order to reap both long- and short-term strategic benefits. The study therefore finds support for both models of democratic peace as well as realist assumptions.

However, as the study shows, normative security considerations were less evident, and the Union promoted its own interests as primary interests when needed even at its own cost, often risking efforts to achieve normative goals such as implementing rule of law and fighting organized crime and corruption. Thus, the project finds that the security dimension of EU enlargement in the case of Bulgaria questions the notion of 'normative power Europe', and paints a picture of the EU as an actor that is uncommon in EU security studies. These findings can have implications for both traditional enlargement debates, as well as the study of the EU as a security actor, as the EU both actively and strategically exercised their power for security gains in the enlargement to Bulgaria in a way that up until now have been largely neglected by scholars of both enlargement and the EU more broadly.





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All flaws in this project are solely my own.

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# 1 Introduction

The fourth and fifth rounds of enlargement in the European Union, that absorbed twelve new countries in the Union, ten of which were former Communist dictatorships, changed the European map and brought the borders of the European Union to new frontiers. Generally referred to as the 'Eastern enlargement', the process incorporated ten countries that were, by and large, very different from the existing members in terms of languages, culture, history, and governmental and economic structures. The first of the two rounds of Eastern enlargement saw the inclusion of Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in 2004, while the last of the two rounds saw the extension of membership to the two poorest countries of all the Central and Eastern European countries<sup>1</sup>, namely Bulgaria and Romania. The very transformative nature of EU enlargement has earned it the name of 'the EU's most successful foreign policy', mainly because it moves the internal market and policy cooperation to include new members, and induces behavioural changes in the new member states through the application of membership conditionality (Smith, 2011; Sedelmeier, 2010). Through the use of enlargement, the EU has changed its external environment and the post-Cold War European order. Karen Smith writes:

Enlargement of the European Union .... is the principle means by which the EU has tried to spread prosperity, democracy and security to the former communist countries of Central, Eastern and South-eastern Europe. (...)

... the EU has also used the promise of enlargement ... to influence the domestic and foreign policies of membership aspirants and encourage political and economic reforms, which are seen as necessary to ensure security in Europe.

(Smith 2011:300).

This kind of description is very common when describing the EU's enlargement policies towards the CEECs, from experts, politicians and scholars alike. Fraser Cameron writes: "The enlargement has always been, and still is, a quintessential security policy"

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<sup>1</sup> Hereafter referred to as 'CEECs'

(Cameron, 2007:62). He attracts support from the works of many scholars, who say that security considerations were one of the basic driving forces behind enlargement to Central and Eastern European countries (among others Smith, 2011; Sedelmeier, 2010; Zielonka, 2006; Skålnes, 2005; Lucarelli, 2002; O'Brennan, 2006; Stefanova, 2005, Vachudova, 2005). All though these characteristics are very common descriptions by EU scholars of the policy of enlargement towards the CEECs, surprisingly few scholarly studies have aimed to investigate the security dimension of enlargement *in depth*, and by the use of *empirical data*. As René Schwok writes, there is truly an astonishing paradox at play in the literature when it comes to defining the role of security in enlargement (Schwok, 1999:153). In Alan Mayhew's book it is stated that "... the security benefits of the accession of associated countries are often considered to be more important than the economic benefits", and that "the value of increased security for the existing European Union from enlargement cannot be over-stated" (Mayhew, 1998:187, 195). However, only 3 pages of Mayhew's almost 400-page book on the Union's policy towards Central and Eastern Europe are dedicated to the issue.

Schwok points out that in spite of many scholars who support security as the very rationale of enlargement, very few investigate this dimension, compared to the cultural and economic factors in enlargement (Schwok, 1999:153, 154). While Schwok himself, after an argumentative analysis, comes to the conclusion that security arguments surrounding enlargement are not sufficiently convincing to support the CEECs as a security policy, the paradox remains (Schwok, 1999:162). There seems to be few studies that by the virtue of empirical evidence decisively provide an understanding of the nature and role of security in enlargement. A clear security dimension in enlargement should exist, and should have impact on the policies and motivations of the EU, if the kind of supportive statements presented here hold to be true, but empirical research into this dimension of enlargement has been limited. One reason may be that this is inherently difficult to actually research as an academic topic, especially because the security dimension is more of a politically sensitive issue than the economic or cultural dimension, and therefore is more difficult to provide evidence for.

This thesis seeks to investigate the security dimension of the EU's enlargement policy towards the CEECs, and understand how security issues have implications on the EU's

decision-making process in their decision to enlarge and execution of enlargement strategy towards a case of the CEECs. As far as I am aware, this has not been done before, neither for the case of Bulgaria, nor the role of security in enlargement. The study aims at understanding how security issues play into the enlargement strategy, how it affected the decision to enlarge, and what role it played in crafting the enlargement policy. It will do so by investigating one of the latest additions to the Community, and one of the least studied in security-political terms, namely Bulgaria, who joined the Union in January of 2007. In order to provide new insight in to this theme of EU policy, the study will draw on qualitative research interviews with key informants in order to generate new empirical evidence.

While research has been limited, there are a few notable exceptions: Karen Smith investigates the EU's foreign policy towards Eastern Europe as a whole in a cross-theoretical examination, but concludes with the confirmation of constructivist explanations as to why the EU has worked towards a common foreign policy, including enlargement (Smith, 2004). John O'Brennan also finds support for constructivist theories in his cross-theoretical analysis of the 2004 Eastern enlargement in his book, and also analyses the security in an article from the same year, that focuses on the constructivist framework of 'securitization' (O'Brennan, 2006a; O'Brennan, 2006b). Atsuko Higashino utilizes the same framework of 'securitization' as a speech act, and applies it to the enlargement of 2004 in her article (Higashino, 2004). Lars Skålnes applies a realist framework to the process of enlargement, and finds support for security- and geopolitical interests as the key explanatory factor in the 2004 enlargement (Skålnes, 2005).

In addition, there have been many works that take EU enlargement into account or as a starting point when investigating policy responses to security issues. This can be argued for both internal security and Schengen studies, European energy security studies, as well as conflict studies in the Balkans. These works identify a specific security issue, but do not investigate the full width of the dimension in one analysis. A few of these works will be utilized through the course of the analysis when useful for the discussion. The study takes aim at contributing with empirical evidence from in-depth studies, and will therefore primarily seek to test the hypotheses on the statements gathered, even if it

will support the discussion with secondary-literature, of which some have been mentioned here.

## 1.1 Research question

Citing the knowledge gap of how and why security actually influences enlargement policy and the enlarged EU, the following research question will be investigated, through a case study of Bulgaria's membership bid and process:

**How did security concerns affect the enlargement decision and strategy of the European Union, in the case of Bulgaria?**

The thesis will not necessarily investigate security as an explanation of enlargement, but rather an investigation into the security dimension of how security affected the European Union in both its decision to enlarge, and its conduct in the enlargement process, in the case of Bulgaria. This does not mean that the study will have no implications on the research field of why enlargement happens. Quite the contrary, it will have implications for the theoretical debate on how and why enlargement happens, but it will not seek to prove that security is the only explanatory variable of why enlargement took place. A research contribution such as this one has rarely been done in the past in enlargement research, and Bulgaria is one of the least studied cases of EU enlargement in security terms. Therefore, the aim of the study is to provide new insights into a specific theme; namely the nature and role of security in enlargement, by investigating case of Bulgaria, which as a case itself has seen little research in terms of enlargement, compared to the 2004 countries.

## 1.2 Some definitions

Before providing a structure of the thesis, this sub-chapter will provide a few definitions, first of 'enlargement', and secondly a discussion of the relevance of the comprehensive security concept for our study. The enlargement of the European Union is one of the most complex processes of institutional integration one can find, and the Eastern enlargement saw the integration of 10 former Communist dictatorships into the



common market and the political cooperation. According to Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, the enlargement, meaning the process of acquiring membership to an outsider state from the insider states, can be defined as “a process of gradual and formal horizontal institutionalization of organizational rules and norms” (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2005:5). This is a fairly general definition of extensions of membership to new members of organizations. The enlargement of the EU has formal requirements, after the 1993 Copenhagen Council criteria, which will be accounted for in sub-chapter 4.1, where the extension of membership as a policy tool will be explained.

### 1.2.1 The comprehensive security concept

The concept of security, which this research will base itself on, can be classified as a relatively new security concept, as it is inherently different from the traditional state-centric view on security, as being only concerned with military affairs and the perseverance and protection of sovereignty. In stead, the concept I will draw on is more concerned with the underlying causes of security issues instead of dealing with immediate threats, where politico-military approaches may deal more efficiently with the immediate threat of violent conflict. Security is traditionally defined as “the condition of being protected from or not exposed to danger ... a feeling of safety or freedom from or absence from danger” (Biscop, 2004:3). As there are many different forms of danger other than violence, the very term is broad. I will operate with a definition of security policy based on comprehensive security, which is very different from what is often called security policy, implying the military tool. However, security policy in this thesis can be defined as “a policy aiming to keep an object, in this case the [citizens,] values and interests of the EU, safe” (Biscop, 2004:3).

This type of concept can be found in many works on European security, and is generally seen as being the core vision of the European Security Strategy from 2003, as the strategy goes further than the identification of clear military threats (Biscop, 2004:9, 10; Quille, 2004:3). While the traditional security concept may be described as one-dimensional, the *comprehensive security concept* is best characterized as multi-dimensional, meaning that all dimensions of security is interdependent and interlinked, both political, economic, ecologic, cultural and military (Biscop, 2004:5). The security

justification of enlargement has never really been based on 'hard security', in the sense of being a response towards military threats, whereas NATO enlargement can be seen as a more effective instrument for ensuring European security (Nugent, 2004:4). Rather, the EU enlargement has been justified by EU leaders and others, from a 'soft security' rationale, meant as a response to threats such as organized crime, instability in the near neighbourhood and illegal immigration (Nugent, 2004:4, 5). As will be emphasized, there are two different types of security logics that member states are believed to follow under the theoretical framework of this study; namely the logic of democratic peace, and the logics of long-term geopolitical considerations and security-interests.

### 1.3 Structure of the study

In order to investigate the proposed research question, the study will be structured in the following manner. *The next chapter* will provide the theoretical background for the project, first by briefly summarizing the theoretical debate surrounding EU enlargement. This will be done primarily because the study's findings may have implications for the current debate over what explains enlargement, and not necessarily because the study aims at explaining enlargement in itself. After this summary of constructivist and rationalist explanations to enlargement, the theoretical framework and hypotheses will be presented. First, the hypothesis of democratic peace and security communities will be accounted for, and the utilitarian and normative justifications behind it will be explained. Secondly, the realist framework is discussed, and its hypothesis of geopolitical and strategic concerns will be presented. These two hypotheses will be tested through application to the empirical evidence in the analytical chapters.

*The third chapter* will provide an overview of the research design, the means of data collection and method of analysis. The primary objective of the chapter is justifying the use of the single case study, and outlining how and why it enables this study to withdraw inferences from the evidence. In addition, the particular choice of Bulgaria as a case will be discussed, how the interviewees were sampled, and how the data collection was carried out and the evidence analysed. The chapter will conclude with the strengths and weaknesses of the research design, by emphasizing the strong

internal validity of the single-case study, while underlining its limited external validity ability to generalize over a population of similar cases. The reliability of the study will also be addressed.

*The fourth chapter* proceeds to investigate the evidence collected through the interviews, starting at the original timeline of the historical background of the case, with the EU's decision to enlarge to Bulgaria, and the accession criteria. The accession criteria is explained in the context of being a foreign policy tool for the EU. By investigating the decision to enlarge separately, it should be easier to see what the EU intended to gain from enlargement, or had as preliminary goals, before investigating the process in the next chapter. In other words, structuring the analysis in this way helps the study keep strategic goals and the execution of strategy apart. This chapter finds support for both hypothesis in the evidence concerning the decision to enlarge, and finds that the EU sought a variety of security gains through the enlargement to Bulgaria, in terms of conflict prevention, regional stability, containing Russian influence, ensuring long-term prospects of energy security, as well as fighting internal security threats such as transnational crime and immigration. In its concluding remarks, the chapter argues that the lacking justification in the evidence give little support for a normative security dimension in the EU's security thinking, while both utilitarian democratic peace logics and rationalist strategic security logics are present in the evidence.

*The fifth chapter*, in contrast to the fourth, investigates the empirical evidence in order to explain the altering enlargement strategy of the EU towards Bulgaria. The chapter deals with two specific events: the granting of membership negotiations, the setting of an accession date, and will also deal with the period after membership, namely post-accession conditionality. In this chapter, it is argued that the process was heavily influenced by geopolitical and strategic concerns, where promises were given, negotiations and accession dates granted, without the proper criteria fulfilled. A basic rationale in the empirical evidence is that premature enlargement was allowed to take place, and the EU's most powerful tool was given up willingly, for basic geopolitical and strategic benefits, and immediate security interests. Thus, the realist theory, it is argued, explains the process better than its theoretical counterparts, because conditionality and democracy-promotion was given up for the more pressing interests of the Union. In

particular, it is argued that normative justifications in democratic peace theory cannot explain the decision to enlarge, primarily because the Union demoted normative considerations to second order concerns, drawing a distinct line between what is possible and what was deemed achievable at the time.

In *the sixth chapter*, the study concludes with its findings, and confirms its realist hypothesis, as well as partially confirms the hypothesis of democratic peace. Both logics are present in the evidence analysed, and both utilitarian justifications of enlargement as a security policy is found, alongside evidence of rationalist strategic behaviour. The chapter will also provide an overview of the study's limitations, as well as the implications these findings have for both the further study of EU enlargement, as well as the study of the EU as a security actor.

## 2 Theory and hypotheses

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the security dimension of enlargement in three different stages. First of all, the project will seek to establish whether there are security benefits of enlargement to Bulgaria, and understand the nature of these benefits.

Secondly, the project will investigate how security considerations affected decision-makers in their decision to enlarge to Bulgaria. Thirdly, the project will display which kind of security theory explains this particular case of enlargement, and enhance the understanding of which kind of security logic the enlargement as a foreign policy is eventually based on. In order to do so, the study will base itself on a theoretical framework. This chapter will first briefly summarize the theoretical debates of EU enlargement research up until now, focusing on the rationalist/constructivist divide. It will also provide some overview of research literature in the field. Then the theoretical approaches of the study will be laid out, building on two differing security approaches; namely democratic peace theory and the emergence and expansion of security communities on one hand, and an approach based on realist assumptions on the other.

### 2.1 Traditional theoretical explanations of enlargement – state of research

Theories of EU enlargement have been plentiful, and range from traditional International Relations theories to theories of European integration. While both the liberal intergovernmentalism of Andrew Moravcsik and neo-functionalism have been employed, the most common theories of enlargement can broadly be placed in two camps, a rationalist and a constructivist school of enlargement (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2005:9, 10). The debate between the two schools gained considerable momentum in the run-up to the first Eastern enlargement of the European Union, as enlargements of the EU and NATO were simultaneously taking place, and because of the sheer sizes and scopes of the enlargements to come. These theoretical schools and their state of research will be described in the next sub-chapters.

### 2.1.1 Rationalist approaches

Rationalist approaches to enlargement concerns, like most rationalist models of International Relations and the study of European integration, state that the expected individual costs and benefits of the member states determine the outcome of the policy process (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2005:12). Hence, according to rationalism one can expect that

... states favour the kind and degree of horizontal institutionalization that maximizes their net benefits. More specifically a member state favours the integration of an outsider state ... under the conditions that it will reap positive net benefits from the enlargement, and that these benefits exceeds the benefits it would secure from an alternative form of horizontal institutionalization.

(Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2005:12)

However, what these net benefits are may vary considerably, and different rationalist approaches will weigh different types of benefits as most important. While neo-liberal institutionalists argue that states care most about their own absolute gains or losses, realists assume that state actors are more concerned with external autonomy and gains in power (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2005:13). Hence, the sources of enlargement preferences differ between theories, with the most important difference being found on the systemic level, regarding the specific material conditions that determine a state's preferences. Neill Nugent writes that rationalist scholarship has mainly been preoccupied with two different sets of benefits that member states seek through the enlargement of the European Union: the pursuit of economic opportunity and the promotion of security (Nugent, 2004:4, 5, 6). As noted in the first chapter, there is a knowledge gap in the enlargement literature about which specific security benefits are up for grabs, if they mattered, and which kind of security logic the member states pursue.

Rationalist research on EU enlargement has tended to emphasize the economic dimension of enlargement, and is often criticized for this by constructivists and other enlargement scholars. Christina Schneider has, through her economic models, shown how the use of side-payments and the nature of economic integration has made

enlargement beneficial for all member states, and that the benefits therefore induce agreement (Hix and Høyland, 2011:321, 322). Heather Grabbe shows through her economic analysis that Eastern enlargement in general will neither be as costly nor as difficult as presumed, and that EU member states will benefit economically in the long run, despite the expenses in the short run (Grabbe, 2001:61). While there exist important exceptions to this trend in rationalist scholarship on enlargement, other systemic level variables of rationalist theory, such as security environment and security interests of member states and the EU as a macro-entity have often been neglected (Skålnes, 2005:214). Liberal intergovernmentalists such as Andrew Moravcsik and Milada Vachudova argue that member states agree to enlargement because it is in their “long term economic and geo-political interests”, but do emphasize the economic dimension of this argument (Moravcsik and Vachudova, 2003:43).

While it is important not rule out economic considerations in enlargement, Bulgaria is one of the more peculiar cases, as it was the poorest country to join the Union when it acceded in 2007, with GDP pr. capita less than half of that of Greece and average wages only half of the CEEC average at the time of pre-accession (Grabbe, 2001:43, 46). Hence, one can expect that the enlargement to Bulgaria was the costliest in economic terms, which makes materialist rationalism a less likely explanation for the case.

Indeed, the rationalist research agenda on enlargement has been criticized, because for some countries, the projected economic benefits are marginal and the distribution of EU funds shift from benefiting the existing member states to the new acceding members. Especially constructivists argue that an overall cost-benefit analysis cannot clearly and indisputably show that enlargement benefits the EU as a whole (Nugent, 2004:7). The same goes for security, as the EU risks importing security threats if the new borders prove unstable and the cohesion of EU decision-making, e.g enlargement may fragment the polity (Nugent, 2004:7). Both Karen Smith and John O’ Brennan find in their cross-theoretical analysis of enlargement and foreign policies towards Eastern Europe, that security arguments in themselves, while absolutely present, are not convincing enough to support the CEECs membership (Smith; 2004, O’ Brennan, 2006b).

### 2.1.2 Constructivist approaches

Constructivist theories of enlargement weigh member state interests and cost-benefit analysis as less important, and claim that enlargement policies will be shaped by the degrees of 'cultural match' between the member states and the candidate country and the sense of community in the Union, meaning "... the degree to which the actors inside and outside the organization share a collective identity and fundamental beliefs" (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2005:14). Hence, we can expect that

... the more an external state identifies with the international community that the organization represents and the more it shares the values and norms that define the purpose and the policies of the organization, the stronger the institutional ties it seeks with this organization and the more member states are willing to pursue horizontal institutionalization with this state.

(Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2005:15)

Constructivism has been applied to explain the Eastern enlargement of the European Union based on the common notion that rationalism, and especially materialist rationalism, which predicts economic benefits as the crucial variable in explaining enlargement, fails to explain Eastern enlargement. This is caused by the uneven distribution of costs and benefits among the member states, and the consensus-based decision-making process, where every member state has veto power (Sjursen, 2002:497; Schimmelfennig, 2005:166). Rather, it is the wish to reunite Europe as a cultural entity, and the rhetorical commitment given by the member states from early on makes it inherently difficult to reject the aspirant member states' wish to join the Union. While Schimmelfennig argues that this led the pro-enlargement member states to 'shaming' the sceptics into keeping past promises of re-uniting Europe (Schimmelfennig, 2005:166), this was not the case according to Helene Sjursen. As she writes in her discourse analysis of arguments related to Eastern enlargement:

... norms do not matter because it costs something not to comply with them, but because they are ends in themselves. They appeal to principles or values that are considered valid, true or right.

(2002:508)



Common criticism of social constructivism and other liberal-idealist approaches in general, is also applicable when it comes to academic work on enlargement, in spite of the fact that most enlargement scholars to some degree recognize and agree that norms are important when it comes to explaining European Union enlargement. However, enlargement scholars that hold identity, cultural match and rhetorical entrapment as the most important factors for the member states' decision to enlarge, face both normative and methodological challenges to be resolved. First of all, while public discursive evidence, which constructivist scholarship often rely on, like public statements, speeches and official documents delivered by decision-makers, may contribute to a wider understanding of a phenomenon, it can be argued that constructivists who apply such evidence are ignoring the very nature of diplomatic and political discourse, and are "interpreting evidence in a manner that suits their case" (Nugent, 2004:8). While much can be drawn from public discourse, it is important to keep in mind that it is in fact *public*, and therefore also directed at an audience.

Secondly, the rhetorical entrapment argument may be based on political-ethical grounds, but also involves legitimacy and interests. While states may keep promises on these grounds, it is difficult to ignore the fact that if they keep promises, they appear legitimate and trustworthy, which again may imply a cost-benefit approach to decision-making and promise-keeping. While there might be a normative dimension to promises in the realm of international politics, research that makes these claims can itself be accused of being overly normative. This is a common criticism against constructivist research which is also applicable here. When discussing the EU as a power, there seems to be a general idea among constructivists that spreading peace and democracy in Europe, human rights and gender equality is promoted without the involvement of interests or power, in a way Matlary describes as 'post-national'. She writes:

This kind of scholarship is in itself highly normative, it is not the EU's power which is normative. The problem is elementary: one mistakes political rhetoric for political results. Yet many scholars persist in analysing the EU empirically in these normative and rhetorical terms...

(Matlary, 2009:84)

While one should not rule out arguments based on solidarity, cultural match and community, there are clearly problematic areas for constructivism as a theoretical approach. It is important to recognize that the EU has an interest in spreading its common norms and values, and that the very nature of the Union's approach to enlargement is in fact shaped by its power of attraction, and the exercise of membership conditionality (Hyde-Price, 2006:227).

For constructivists, the case of Bulgaria is not as solid according to the 'cultural match' argument as other CEECs might be. It is the only Slavic country that has been enlarged to, the only one that practices the Cyrillic alphabet exclusively, it is primarily Bulgarian-orthodox, and has never been a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, unlike Hungary, The Czech Republic, Romania and Slovakia, to name a few of the other CEECs who have. It was one of the countries most loyal to the Soviet Union during the cold war, unlike other CEECs such as Romania (Katsikas, 2012:5). In addition, it is the only country that has both been a part of the Ottoman Empire and a member of the Warsaw pact. Hence, if one looks at the historical background, Bulgaria is arguably the most deviant case according to this argument.

## 2.2 Two theories of security in enlargement

This thesis seeks to investigate the role of security in enlargement, and to what extent the security dimension counted in the decision to enlarge. However, not only should it investigate to what extent security mattered, but more importantly *how* does it matter? As the scholarly disagreement demonstrates, as well as the knowledge gap, the nature and justification for security in enlargement is obscure. There are differing theoretical views on which kind of security logic the member states were guided by, to what extent norms and values matter in the enlargement process, and to which degree there was strategic behaviour from the member states in their decision. The two models of security that the thesis will draw upon are quite different in premises and logic, and fall into sharp divides in terms of being either idealist or realist in their prediction of member state behaviour.

### 2.2.1 A model of Democratic peace theory and Democratic security communities

From the philosophical writings of Immanuel Kant and up until today, the development of democratic peace theory has evolved substantially, with both qualitative and quantitative research on the phenomenon of inter-democratic peace. This phenomenon, meaning that democratic states do not wage wars against each other, is not a new one, but has seen greater interest from researchers through the last decades as to what it is about democracies that makes them more peaceful than other forms of government (Lucarelli, 2002:10). The phenomenon of inter-democratic peace is one of the strongest theories of political science empirically, although many scholars differ on exactly what in democratic governance it is that makes them more peaceful.

Sonia Lucarelli spells out a theoretical framework that mentions three types of justification as to why democracies do not fight each other. Two of them can be described as institutional, and one as normative. The first institutional explanation is democracies' responsiveness to its citizens, as citizens oppose war, and that the elected governments stand to lose elections if they do not respond to the electorate's wishes (Lucarelli, 2002:11). The second institutional explanation concerns the fact that democracies are built up with counter-weights and complex decision-making systems, which tends to make decision-makers slower and constrained when facing the possibility of war. These constraints of the democratic process are also present in antagonist democracies, and therefore, democratic leaders do not fear attacks from other democracies (Lucarelli, 2002:12).

The normative dimension of the theory of inter-democratic peace is probably the most important one, as it helps explain why democracies do not fight other democracies, while they might wage war on non-democracies. According to these normative types of arguments, liberal democracies are not only constrained by the nature of decision-making processes or electoral pressures, but are also guided by norms, values and procedures that have been institutionalized in the political culture and system of a democracy over a long period of time (Lucarelli, 2002:12). As Thomas Risse points out, liberal democracies are more committed to respecting human rights, guaranteeing fundamental freedoms of its citizens, protecting the rights of its minorities precisely

because of the presence of these norms and rules, and the peaceful conflict-resolution in the internal political sphere (Lucarelli, 2002:12). Hence, Lucarelli argues:

... the third version of democratic peace argues ... that the peaceful conduct of democracies towards similar regimes is an extension of the norms, rules and procedures that guide internal politics to relations with political regimes perceived to be similar.

(Lucarelli, 2002:12, 13)

These shared values and norms provide democracies with the necessary condition for self-identification of themselves as members of a community. As Lucarelli claims, areas of democratic peace represent a 'security community', meaning an area where states neither expect or prepare for violent conflict with each other (Lucarelli, 2002:13). There are three characteristics of a security community, according to Lucarelli: "(i) shared identities, values and meanings; (ii) many-sided and direct relations amongst the units; (iii) diffuse reciprocity" (Lucarelli, 2002:13). Hence, there are expectations in these communities that conflicts are resolved by peaceful means, and that violent conflict is unthinkable among the units. The security community concept can hence be merged with the concept of democratic peace if the shared norms, values and identity springs from liberal democracy (Lucarelli, 2002:14). These communities can be described as:

- A community in which there are shared identities, values and meanings provided by liberal democracy
- Many-sided and direct relations amongst the units that are greatly smoothed by the greater level of openness and permeability of liberal-democratic societies
- Diffused reciprocity and dependable expectations of peaceful exchange depend to a large extent on the existence of an area of democratic peace

(Lucarelli, 2002:15)

Adler and Barnett distinguish between tightly-coupled and loosely-coupled security communities, where tightly-coupled communities go beyond a minimal definition of a security community, and also contain, among other things, a system of government that lies between sovereign states and a regional, centralized government (Lucarelli, 2002:15). In this view, the supra-national nature of the EU makes it an example of a

tightly-coupled democratic security community, while NATO is an example of a loosely-coupled democratic security community (Lucarelli, 2002:15).

According to Lucarelli's framework of liberal democratic security communities, one can expect that the advancement of security interests of the member states comes through the enlargement of the community to include new members in the fold, by helping establishment of institutions of liberal democracy, meaning "the formal democratic institutions and procedures, rule of law and respect for fundamental freedoms and rights" (Lucarelli, 2002:19). The EU can be expected to enlarge in order to spread the norms and values of liberal democracy, because it is a 'normative power', meaning that it is not only a normative power because it is constructed on a normative basis, but because it "predisposes to act in a normative way in international relations" (Lucarelli, 2002). The liberal democracies in the European Union promotes democracy because they get *utility* from it, meaning that it is expected to create peace, and therefore has a rationalist or utilitarian dimension. In addition, democratization is about spreading universal values, and contains a normative dimension, because promotion of democracy is the morally right thing to do, "a liberal mission" (Wolff and Wurm, 2011:79, 80, 81). Thus, the spread of democracy and liberal values does not only bring about the benefits of peace and mutual interdependence, but it also good and valuable in it self. Therefore, the liberal-idealist approach is by and large normative, because it identifies civilian and normative power as "a good thing" (Hyde-Price, 2006:218).

Consequently, member states utilize enlargement for two distinct reasons in this hypothesis:

- H1: Member states make use of enlargement to Bulgaria in order to export liberal democracy, rule of law, human rights, democratic values and norms and establish many-sided relations, through the use of their policy instruments, in order to enlarge the democratic security community of the EU, both because it secures liberal democratic peace between states and fosters regime stability, and because doing so is morally right <sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Hereafter referred to as the democratic peace hypothesis. The two logics in the hypothesis will be referred to as either the utilitarian security logic or the normative security logic.

Central to this assumption is that bringing democracy, market economy and many-sided interdependence to new areas helps stabilizing the external milieu of the European Union, thus minimizing the risks of armed conflict, advancing human rights and the rights of minorities. This theory thus assumes that the Union seeks to do this through the application of the instruments at hand, namely enlargement and the tools that come with it; membership conditionality and power of attraction. These assumptions will help construct two hypotheses, with the differing justifications, will be tested in the empirical evidence gathered through in-depth interviews.

### 2.2.2 A model of security- and geopolitical interests

While the prevailing theory of security in enlargement is one of democratic peace and community-building, other theories have emerged seeking to both widen and deepen the scope in which the security dimension is analyzed in the context of enlargement. While democratic peace theory and the literature on security communities have shown remarkably strong empirical standings, it can be criticized for ignoring the very nature of enlargement, namely the geographical expansion of the organization, and the moving of external borders that come along with it. The theories of democratization and community-building may indeed be very useful for explaining the absence of war, but one might argue that there are numerous other security issues at hand in enlargement, that the theories do not fully account for or claim to matter.

The other explanatory model in this study is based on expectations of rational behavior by EU member states in their decision to enlarge, with a focus on potential security gains to be achieved for the Union through the extension of membership to Bulgaria. While rational institutionalism is a wide theory of social science, the thesis draws specifically on the insights of realism in this theory, which is seldom employed in the study of the EU. Intergovernmentalism is an analytical approach where soft rationalism and other traditional assumptions of realism are applied to the study of European Union policy-making (Pollack, 2006:9, 10). Hence, they are closely related in their core assumptions, except that intergovernmentalism recognizes that institutionalization matters in international politics, and that processes of domestic politics to some degree

have an influence on state preferences (Rosamond, 2000:201). Realism applied to the European Union rests of a few basic assumptions:

- The international system is basically anarchic, and states are the primary actors. This implies that states ensure their own safety in a self-help system, and that the EU is not a sovereign actor per say, but rather that the EU serves as a 'vehicle' for the member states' collective interests
- States are rational, unitary actors, meaning that they behave strategically based on cost-benefit calculations, and that they pursue security, power and interest maximization
- States have an interest in their external environment, and this particularly goes for great powers who have the capability and strong interests in their milieu. Thus, states have interests in the stability of their environment, and the EU's cooperation can be seen as an attempt to collectively shape their own milieu, driven by the Union's largest powers
- States are not exclusively engaged in security and power-maximization under realism, they also engage in 'ethical and normative policies'. However, these are second-order concerns, and as long as they do not collide with core interests and security, they are pursued by member states

(Hyde-Price, 2006:221, 222, 223; Hyde-Price, 2008:31, 32)

While the first theory of liberal democratic peace is both a normative and a utilitarian approach to security policy, the second theory of realism offers a rationalist approach. In this study, I wish to enhance the understanding of which kind of security logic the Union follows in enlargement, and what they view as the best way to achieve these benefits. Hence, democratic peace theory assumes that enlargement will lead to the abolition of violent resolutions of conflict, while the geopolitical approach assumes that the member states of the Union, and particularly Great Britain, France and Germany, seek security gains through geographical expansion, and hence leveraging the political control of the Union over vital resources and countering specific security risks. This approach focuses on the interests to be served in enlargement, and thus follows a strategic, non-idealist security logic. This does not mean that the strategic and geopolitical approach exclude the importance of norms or values. States do pursue ethical

and normative concerns, but they are ‘second-order concerns’, meaning that the national interests of the state come first (Hyde-Price, 2006:222).

While most scholars of the European Union put less emphasis on the geopolitical and security-interest analysis of the European Union, there are reasons why interests, security issues and geography should matter in enlargement. Christopher Hill argues that if one accepts that the external border of the EU matters to the Union, and that enlargement is the major influence on the character of this boundary, one has to analyze the Union and its enlargement project in a geopolitical context (Hill, 2002:98). With geopolitics I mean the influence of geographic factors such as demography, topography, resources, climate and physical size on politics, politics interpreted geographically (Harbo, 2012:14), or the influence of “spatial organization of the world on international politics” (Hill, 2002:98).

The inclusion of a new member state, namely Bulgaria, means that the Union is adding to its weight in international politics, and physically adding a new territory and population to its own, extending its external borders to the Western Balkans, Turkey, and the Black Sea. In sum, the Union’s member states, if they are rational, may be expected to take these factors into consideration when they enlarge, because they seek to maximize their benefits and political opportunities, and reduce costs and risks, based on a complete assessment of the potential roadmap of decisions they face. In short, the consequences of their actions should be properly assessed and evaluated, before moving on with the policy.

To understand which kind of security gains and security challenges member states stand to gain from enlargement, this thesis will identify potential threats and risks based on the recollection of the interviewees and their perceptions of security in enlargement, the comprehensive security concept and the European Security Strategy of 2003. These potential challenges will be evaluated through the use of data acquired in the interviews. The geopolitical approach expects states to take the risks and opportunities into account when deciding whether or not to open their markets, borders and political systems to new geographic areas and the people who inhabit them.



As Christopher Hill argues, enlargement and its security and geopolitical nature has far too long been neglected among both students and scholars who study the European Union (Hill 2002:98). While not a traditional superpower, nor a military one, the European Union is a dominant force in the world, and posits remarkable capabilities and tools to shape its environment. The traditional description of the EU as a 'civilian power' or 'normative power', which forms a basic assumption in the theory of democratic peace, has led to the analytical approach to the European Union in foreign relations that often ignore interests, strategy and geopolitics, because it seems irrelevant to describe an actor with lacking military capabilities and little hard power (Hill 2002:98). However, as Adrian Hyde-Price points out in his realist critique of normative analyses of the EU, the EU does possess hard power and coercive capabilities, and does make use of them, especially in enlargement, with carrots and sticks, incentives and sanctions (Hyde-Price, 2006:226, 227). In this way, the EU is a vehicle for member state interests and their pursuit of them.

Therefore, based on realist assumptions, one can first assume that member states enlarge for net benefits, and that if costs exceed benefits, they would not agree to enlargement. Secondly, the theory assumes that the member states have strategic and security-political interests in enlargement, and that these are critical to the decision to enlarge, because they are security benefits to all of the nation states. Thirdly, one can assume that the Union members through enlargement seek to reduce security risks and respond to threats to their own territory and citizens, as well as their own political interests, in accordance with the comprehensive security concept above, and that the benefits of enlargement are primarily security-political. Fourthly, in accordance with other rationalist scholarship in European Union decision-making, the theory assumes that bargaining power matters. Hence, one can expect the largest states to be crucial players in enlargement, as well as the ones with the biggest stakes in the security-political arena. If the largest states have interests in enlargement, we should expect them to be the drivers of the enlargement process. The strategic and geo-political hypothesis goes as follows:

H2: Member states seek to enhance their own security and pursue geopolitical and strategic interests through enlargement, because there are geopolitical and strategic benefits of enlarging to Bulgaria, and the extension of membership to Bulgaria helps reduce specific security risks to the EU<sup>3</sup>.

The hypothesis, as realist theory in general, is arguably compatible with parts of the theory of democracy promotion and democratic peace theory under certain conditions. The utilitarian dimension and justification for democracy promotion makes it a powerful tool for serving security interests, if decision-makers accept the empirical correlation between peace and democracy (Wolff and Wurm, 2011:83). However, if the promotion of democracy is incompatible with other goals of security interests, the former must give way for the latter, as ethical or normative concerns are second-order concerns for states under realist theory, while security is the primary (Wolff and Wurm, 2011:83; Hyde-Price, 2008:31, 32)

It should be mentioned that this theory does not necessarily exclude economic interests as an important incentive for enlargement. On the contrary, it seems clear that security and economy are linked in the European Union's approach to enlargement, and form two very important interdependent arms of foreign policy for the Union (Smith, 2004). However, economic considerations will only be addressed in this capacity in instances where it is relevant for explaining the security dimension.

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<sup>3</sup> Hereafter referred to as the geopolitical or realist hypothesis. The inherent logic the hypothesis will be referred to as the realist or geopolitical/strategic security logic.

### 3 Methodology and research design

The research design refers to the framework in which research is carried out, and is defined by Gerring as “the way in which empirical evidence is brought to bear on a hypothesis” (Gerring, 2007:216). In this sense, the design of a study can be described as a plan or strategy that encompasses the questions that will be answered, how we will answer them, and why we can provide answers to them. It needs to take into account the questions that will be asked, identify the relevant data material for the particular research project, include the appropriate method of analysis as well as evaluate the standards of scientific research in regards to the particular project. In addition, the design gives the study a sense of direction and time frame, and places the scientific contribution in a specific context, namely the area of research.

This chapter will first explain the study’s approach to answering the research question, through discussing the usefulness of qualitative research in this study and the relevance of a case study. Under this section, the specific choice of case will also be discussed, as well as the advantages of the ‘congruence method case study’. It will also place the contribution in to the current research agenda, and discuss the usefulness of a qualitative case study of EU macro-politics in the study of EU enlargement, as well as in regards to the theoretical approach. Secondly, the data-collection and use of in-depth interviews will be accounted for, as well as the sampling of interviewees, the structure of the interviews and the interview guide, and the recording of data. Thirdly, the method of analysis will be discussed in terms of how the data material will be handled in order to draw inferences from it. In its conclusion, the chapter will offer some remarks concerning the validity and reliability concerns of the research design.

#### 3.1 The case study

In order to investigate the security dimension of EU enlargement to Bulgaria, the research design of this study will be based base on a single case study of the enlargement to Bulgaria. Case studies are often described as ‘small *N*’-studies, because they focus on investigating a small number or even a single case of a phenomenon, in

order to say something about this phenomenon in general. Gerring defines case studies as “an intensive study of a single unit or a small number of single units, for the purpose of understanding a larger class of similar units (a population of cases)” (Gerring, 2007:37). George and Bennett define a case as “an instance of a class of events”, meaning events that constitute phenomenon of scientific interest (George and Bennett, 2005:17). This definition seems useful, as my case is the EU enlargement process towards Bulgaria, which can be seen as a single case I investigate in order to enhance the understanding of the phenomenon of security in enlargement in general. Hence, the population of similar cases can be described as the Eastern enlargement process, where the enlargement to several other member states that can be said to be similar in many respects.

There are several reasons why a case study is the most appropriate way to go about when investigating the role of *security* in European Union enlargement. First of all, a qualitative research method seems to yield the best inferences when it comes to researching enlargement, as case studies are generally stronger where statistical and quantitative research are weak (George and Bennett, 2005:19). As European Union enlargement only concerns a very limited number of cases, statistical research designs seem irrelevant in investigating the research question. Thus, the single case study seems to be most appropriate in terms of scope, as a multi-case study of several cases of enlargement would be more demanding in terms of workload. Secondly, the case study research design is the best equipped to investigate the research question as well as develop the theories of this study further, as there are several advantages for case studies in comparison to other research methods which are especially attractive for the study.

George and Bennett identify four strong advantages for case studies that I will draw on in this study. These advantages make them valuable for hypotheses testing and theory development, something that fits the research design well. The theories need development and testing of its basic assumptions, and the findings in this thesis will contribute to this. First of all, case studies offer a high level of conceptual validity, meaning that they fare better in identifying and measuring indicators of the concepts we intend to measure (George and Bennett, 2005:19). As the theoretical foundation

involves diffuse concepts such as interests, democracy, security, threats, and risks, the indicators of these factors, which we wish to measure, are not suited for quantitative analysis, as quantitative analysis often utilize conceptual stretching for larger samples (George and Bennett, 2005:19).

Secondly, case studies are stronger when it comes to deriving new hypotheses and identifying new variables, especially through the use of interviews of experts (George and Bennett, 2005:20). If during an interview, a question is posed about what motivation a decision-maker had for a specific policy, and the answer from the expert contains a motivation not previously known to the researcher, this helps the researcher refine his questions and his hypotheses of what variables determine a special outcome. For this project, this is very useful, as we try to investigate how security affects the decision-making and strategy of enlargement to Bulgaria, by applying theories that have rarely been applied before through a case study.

Third, causal mechanisms are explored in detail in case studies, while in statistical studies contextual factors are omitted entirely (George and Bennett, 2005:21). Cases such as this one often have complex outcomes with intervening variables, which the theoretical debates between constructivists and rationalists have shown. While correlations may occur, it does not necessarily mean that there exists a causal relationship between two variables (George and Bennett, 2005:21). Say for example, for this case of enlargement, we may find many different security gains in enlargement, where the application of policy tools may yield gains in the member states' security, but that does not necessarily mean that these gains motivated decision-makers. We wish to examine the security logic in enlargement and whether it mattered to decision-makers in the EU, and the method of qualitative interviews and single-case study research is well suited to investigate this possible cause, and thereby the possible causal link.

Last, but not least, case studies are well suited for modelling and assessing complex causal relations, and making contingent generalizations. Because only one case of a phenomenon is investigated, making generalizations for the entire population is difficult. However, case studies may produce narrower, richer, and more contingent

generalizations, that are fruitful for the development and testing of hypotheses (George and Bennett, 2005:23).

### 3.1.1 The relevance of EU-macro politics case studies in enlargement

Sedelmeier and Schimmelfennig's useful book on the theories and state of research on EU enlargement, generally conclude that in order to enhance comparability, and move beyond the rationalist/constructivist divide, more comparative analysis is needed, and that there is limited use in single-case studies (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2005:25). While this opinion is easy to agree to, the authors seem locked in comparing economic benefits and constructivist norms and identity as the two most important driving forces behind enlargement, while theories of security and geopolitics is left little room, with the exception of Skålnes' contribution in the same book (Skålnes, 2005:213). In order to develop theories of security further, a case study may indeed be the best way to go about. It can help us understand what type of security logics was at work in enlargement, and if, how and why they mattered. While single-case studies are not equipped for generalizations over larger population, it may still be helpful in terms of developing theories and their applicability on a political process such as enlargement.

If one takes the gap between how much attention is given to the security gains that are perceived to have served the Union since its Eastern enlargement, and how little empirical research on this dimension has actually been carried out, a case study seems like an adequate starting point in order to see if the theory holds when matched up to empirical evidence, and how the hypotheses may be refined to better resemble the real world. In such a view, the negligence of geopolitics and security concerns, and even the geographical factor in the European Union research agenda, as Christopher Hill writes, can no longer be sustained, and need to be addressed in research on EU politics (Hill, 2002:98).

### 3.1.2 Case study design

My single-case study design is based on what George and Bennett refers to as the 'congruence method'. As most case studies have more than one case to investigate, they often base themselves on methods of structured focused comparison, and find cases

that are similar in all respects but one. However, as EU enlargement only contains a very limited number of cases, both if you count number of actual absorptions of new members or number of actual enlargement rounds, such a design seems more difficult to pursue. The study will therefore choose an alternative design that is “the within-case method of causal interpretation, which may include congruence, process-tracing, or both, which does not operate according to the structure or causal logic of experiments” (George and Bennett, 2005:181). This is the method known as the congruence method, which starts with a theory and the attempts to investigate whether or not the theory is able to explain a certain outcome. There is an outcome of a case, i.e. the enlargement of the EU to Bulgaria, and this study bases itself on the predictions noted in the first chapter, that Bulgaria’s entry to the Union boosts the EU’s security situation. Hence, one expects a causal relationship between the security situation and perceptions of member states and their behaviour in the subsequent enlargement of the Union to Bulgaria.

Congruence methods are based on the congruence of the hypothesized causes and the observed effects or outcomes. However, in this case, it is important to demonstrate how such a causal mechanism actually links the two. Without this causal mechanism, the effect may well be spurious and unrelated to the actual hypotheses. Hence, it is important not only to show that there is specific security benefits to be achieved for member states through the EU enlargement to Bulgaria, but also to provide evidence of if, why and how they mattered. To achieve this, we will utilize a method of process tracing, that identifies the manner which the independent variable (member state security logics) leads to the outcome on the dependent variable (behaviour in enlargement process). Just because the two variables might have congruence, does not mean that there is a causal link between them (George and Bennett, 2005:181, 182). In order to investigate this hypothesized causal link, I will collect and process data from informed professionals with knowledge about the process, and thereby trace the link between the two variables.

### 3.1.3 Choice of case

As already explained, the study will focus on one case of European Union enlargement only, in stead of multiple cases. There are several reasons why this study will focus on

only one case, and why this particular case is Bulgaria's inclusion in the Union. This needs to be explained in order to achieve the highest level of transparency when it comes to choice of case. Case study researchers are often criticized for biased case selection, as the research objects are not selected through probability selections or their level of representativeness (George and Bennett, 2005:23, 24). Indeed, case study researchers often deliberately choose cases that share or offer a particular outcome. This involves choosing explanatory richness over parsimony when explaining a case, in a trade-off against the ability to generalize (George and Bennett, 2005:31).

This particular case does have certain attributes that are favourable when choosing a case for this particular project. Bulgaria is the last country, along with Romania, in the fifth enlargement. They were the last exactly because they were not deemed ready by the European institutions for enlargement in 2004 along with the eight other CEECs. In fact, many still see their readiness at accession as lacking, and argue that they were let in too early (Primatarova, 2010; Brady, 2009). This is advantageous for investigating this case, as there seemed to be a rationale for letting Bulgaria and Romania accede despite doubts of readiness, because it may point towards specific causes for the accession dates being set. Indeed, Romania and Bulgaria were given an accession date on beforehand, something which is very rare, because it is thought to hurt the EU's influence over the reform process (Smith 2004:193).

In addition, the usual economic rationale of enlargement is significantly weaker in the case of Bulgaria and Romania than in the rest of the CEECs. While all of the applicants which joined in 2004 were significantly poorer than the existing EU-bloc, and thus could be expected to become net-beneficiaries of EU budgets, Bulgaria and Romania were in a class of their own entirely. They are the two poorest countries in the EU, with a GDP per capita at their accession date of only 33% of the EU average, while countries such as Poland had 50% at their date of accession (BBC News Online, 2007). This also involves the fact that the new consumers brought in to the internal market are more economically restricted, and less likely to buy more expensive goods from the richer already existing bloc, limiting the applicability of the pareto-optimal market enlargement argument of Moravcsik and Vachudova (Moravcsik and Vachudova, 2003:49, 50, 51).



Thus, out of all the CEECs, Bulgaria is probably the least profitable country to enlarge to out of all the CEECs, economically speaking. This does not mean that economics can be ruled out all together in the case of Bulgaria, but it does imply that logically, the economic argument is weaker in this particular case than in other cases of Eastern enlargement. Consequently, one might expect theories of security to fare better in explaining the behaviour of the EU in this case than in others. This should hold if one looks at Bulgaria's history and geography as well. As a very loyal regime to the Soviet Union during the Cold War, with a mixed history of democracy after the fall of communist dictatorship, it makes a good case for exploring the security dimension (Katsikas, 2012:5).

Geographically, enlargement to Bulgaria (and Romania) opens a new coast line for the Union to the Black Sea, and borders the Western Balkans with its fresh wounds of conflict at the time of the gradual accession process. Hence, it is also a useful case for exploring the geopolitical aspect. These factors all contribute to the choosing of Bulgaria as a 'crucial case test', as George and Bennett explain. Crucial case tests can be classified as 'most likely' or 'least likely' cases, both with different approaches to how to draw inferences from choices of case (George and Bennett, 2005:24). The case of Bulgaria is a most likely test, because out of the population of CEECs, this case is the one where it most likely that there is a security dimension, if there is one, and the least likely to hold a strong economic rationale among the CEECs.

As well as being a well-suited case for investigating security's role in enlargement, it is also a case I am personally very familiar with. I have lived and worked with political affairs there for nine months, and find myself to be in a unique position in regards to contacts and sources when investigating this question. This proved very helpful in getting interviewees for this thesis, as explained in chapter 3.2.2. My knowledge of the country and its enlargement process, as well as my experience from working with political affairs in the country, may also provide methodological challenges. As George and Bennett writes, one of the main obstacles of case studies is biased case selection. However, preliminary knowledge of a case may give stronger research designs, as some

knowledge of the case in question allows one to more easily apply tough tests of the case (George and Bennett, 2005:23, 24).

## 3.2 Data collection

The research into enlargement has, by and large, been studies into discourse; argumentative studies as well as document analysis. Not many of them have been based on actual gathering and analysis of new data, mostly because quantitative studies in this area are insignificant. Of course, macro-economic data has been gathered and analysed, by for example Heather Grabbe (2001) and Christina Schneider (2009), but very few have conducted data collection and analysis on the basis of member state political interests. Karen Smith is a useful exception, with her book *The Making of EU Foreign Policy – The case of Eastern Europe*, where the EU's political interests in, and subsequent policy towards, Eastern Europe is thoroughly analysed in different theoretical perspectives (Smith, 2004).

An important distinction to be made is that while case studies and other types of research that are purely argumentative, logical, or based on secondary sources, it should remain a vital condition for research to investigate the sources as close to the decision-maker as one can get. This means that while it is useful in this case to analyse the context or environment in which interests are formed and shaped, actually testing the hypotheses and assumptions in discussion with actual decision-makers is of great importance. It allows us to fully understand not only what and how, but also why, without making a leap of faith from theory and context to inferences.

Hence, it was important for me to collect data about the theme in question, exactly because it had not been done a lot of times before. This does not mean that secondary sources will play no part in this research. Quite the contrary, the collected data will be analysed in the context of existing literature, compared and discussed in light of it, as it would seem wasteful not to take existing research into account. It also strengthens internal validity through the recommended method of triangulation, where several methods are combined in order to be able to draw stronger inferences (Gerring, 2007:17). While the collection of data was both time consuming and was expensive in

terms of finances, it was an important priority for this research project to contribute to the field in a way that was somewhat new. Therefore, a qualitative interview design was chosen to collect the data.

### 3.2.1 The research interview

As the research design is chosen for purpose of investigating, generating and even refining security-political hypotheses of European Union enlargement, the most important reason for choosing the qualitative interview as the method of data collection is the flexibility of the method, compared to other structured interview types, and the insight it gives into the interviewees' experiences and thoughts on a given subject (Bryman, 2004:319). I seek to investigate how and why the security dimension affects enlargement policies in the case of Bulgaria, even though there are clear theoretical approaches that project answers to the research question. The data collection design reflects this approach, as even though I have a clear idea about what the security dimension might look like, or how it influences the EU's approach, it is inherently important that the sources are not biased. Yet, there are also clear hypotheses to investigate, and see if there is empirical support for them. A clear advantage of the qualitative interview is exactly this: one wants the interviewees to give us their side of the story, their impressions and thoughts, which can be utilized in research, but still have a clear direction and questions that can verify and/or falsify hypotheses. These two different considerations are reflected in the two types of qualitative research interviews, namely un-structured and semi-structured interviews (Bryman, 2004:320, 321). I chose to combine the two, as most qualitative researchers do when conducting interviews.

While semi-structured interviews give the advantage of asking the same questions to all interviewees, and a an opportunity of comparison, un-structured interviews let the interviewees talk as much as possible, with only a short list of topics to be covered in the interview. In the interviews, it was important to have a clear structure, that all questions and topics were covered, yet it was vital not to lead the interviewee, and let their experiences and thoughts be the primary focus of the conversation. To make sure this was the case, and ensure maximum flexibility, the interviews were designed to

incorporate both these considerations, and the resulting interviews can be said to lie somewhere in between the two ideal models, namely the unstructured and the semi-structured interview.

### 3.2.2 Interviewees

In the case that this study seeks to investigate, the number of informed interviewees is small, and not necessarily easily accessible. A central question to be answered was 'who can provide an overview of the thinking behind the decision-making of the EU?', and 'who should one speak to in order to achieve the fullest possible understanding of the member states' interests in enlargement'? An optimal situation would be to sample high-level officials with knowledge about the enlargement process from both EU institutions, like the European Commission, as well as from each of the member states. However, as this would be both costly, time-consuming as well as being difficult to coordinate, the limitations in time, costs and width of the project suggested that other ways of finding interviewees were necessary.

This is a common problem to encounter in qualitative interviewing, where potential informants are difficult to find and not easily accessible, and qualitative researchers are therefore often forced to find alternative and convenient solutions in order to sample interviewees (Bryman, 2004:333). Convenience sampling is much less transparent and more subjective than traditional probability sampling, and is also deemed necessary in qualitative studies where the population of informants is unknown (Bryman, 2004:333). Therefore, in order to carry out the interview, I initially tried to reach out to Commission officials for interviews, as the Commission is responsible for negotiations and contact with member states during the process, and therefore can be expected to be fully informed on member state preferences and concerns. However, none of the officials I contacted was available or even replied to my requests. This hurts the representativeness of the interview sample, because the closer one gets to the decision-makers in a study of EU-enlargement, the more robust the findings might be.

Sampling was therefore conducted also on the premise of convenience, where my own personal contacts and knowledge of Bulgaria, as well as the sampling method that is

commonly referred to as 'snowballing', led me to the informants that ended up being interviewed. 'Snowballing' refers to the method where one informant who is interviewed for the thesis uses his/her own contact network and recommends other informants that he/she believes may be useful for the researcher's project (Bryman, 2004:334). In my situation, my own contact network in Sofia, Budapest and Oslo provided me with almost all of the interviewees in this particular manner. While the selection of these was arguably subjective and less transparent, the snowballing process is still a very fruitful way to attract informed sources, and allowed me access to informants that I would not have had access to if I had not had contacts and correspondence with initial informants. It must still be underlined that the snowballing process was not alone in determining the key informants who were selected, and that several other criteria were important in the sampling process.

A few considerations were vital in choosing relevant informants other than their availability. In particular, their level of knowledge about the issue and if they were in the position to contribute was an evident requirement. In addition, their background was crucial, and I intentionally sought to differentiate the type of interviewees to be included, because in the analytical method of comparison and categorization, the analysis would be more fruitful and the inferences more genuine and robust, if the selected interviewees had different nationalities and professional experience. If they all presented similar thoughts on one topic of interest, the inference is more robust, as it is not merely one type of decision-maker, diplomat or analyst, or even a single nationality that is interviewed, but a broad spectrum of people, with different types of experience to draw from.

After careful consideration, I included three Bulgarian, two Norwegian and one British citizen in the final sample, which is listed in table 3.2.2. Three of them were career diplomats, two had been high-level politicians, and one was a journalist and political analyst with experience from political analysis and journalistic reporting in Bulgaria and the Balkans. Out of the sample, three came from the decision-making side in Bulgaria, where they handled the enlargement process from their own separate function in the government and the civil service. In addition, one of the Norwegian diplomats had been posted in Sofia, and had long experience there dealing daily with

the matters at hand. The other had been the Norwegian ambassador to the EU. Hence, while I unfortunately could not include anyone from the Commission or from the EU-side in the sample, it was vital that I sampled someone who could provide an overview of the process, with hands-on information on the member states concerns and interests in enlargement, which could provide a *macro-perspective* on the process. In this sense, the sampling both from the observer-side and from the applicant-side provided an overview with the entire process and their own experience with it that might even have been missing in sampling from specific member state officials, who could even have provided one-dimensional views on enlargement.

### **Anonymity, recording and data protection**

Another initial concern, which may be a primary reason as to why interviewing and empirical research into the security dimension of enlargement has been scarce, is the fact that security is more of a politically sensitive issue than for example economics or culture, and is therefore often refrained from in diplomatic discourse. For politicians or diplomats in office to be outspoken about issues such as Russian influence in Bulgaria in the post-Cold War strategic environment, or even their own personal experiences through official capacity, could prove difficult for them as professionals. Therefore, it was important to give the interviewees an opportunity to decline the use of recording devices during the interview. As Bryman writes, interviewees might often feel restrained by the use of recording devices (Bryman, 2004:330, 331). On the other hand, it was important for me to be able to capture everything that was being said correctly, and have the ability to pay attention and prepare questions and follow up on comments as I went along, so I therefore chose to use a recorder, and this strengthens the reliability of the study. I also offered the use of total anonymity and partial anonymity. All of the interviewees declined the use of total anonymity, and half of them chose to have the possibility to remain anonymous when speaking of specific issues. All of them consented to the use of a recording device. The wishes and full consent of participation were given through a signed agreement between the interviewees and myself.

When conducting research interviews, one often faces a situation where sensitive data concerning the people interviewed needs to be handled. Other than the actual information provided by the interviewees, the researcher often handles sensitive

Table 3.2.2 List of interviewees

Name	Current occupation	Former occupation/experience of relevance	Time and place of the interview
H.E. Dr. Solomon Passy	Director of the Atlantic Club of Bulgaria, a Euro-Atlantic integration NGO, and politician	Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria, Chairman-in-office of the OSCE (2004), Chairman of the UN Security Council (2002/2003), former Member of the Bulgarian Parliament for the party National Movement for Stability and Progress	22.1.2013, at the offices of The Atlantic Club of Bulgaria, Sofia, Bulgaria
Mrs. Pavlina Popova	Attorney at law and Director of Exlege Consulting Ltd.	Former Foreign affairs adviser to the President of the Republic of Bulgaria H.E. Dr. Georgi Parvanov, former Deputy Director of the think tank European Policy Forum. Former politician for the Bulgarian Socialist Party	22.1.2013, at the Rila Hotel, Sofia, Bulgaria.
H.E. Mrs. Tove Skarstein	Ambassador of the Kingdom of Norway to Hungary and the Republic of Slovenia	Former Ambassador of the Kingdom of Norway to the Republic of Bulgaria, former Ambassador-at-large for Trafficking issues/Senior adviser in the Norwegian Foreign Ministry, former Counsellor at the Norwegian Delegation to NATO, various diplomatic postings and experience in the Norwegian Foreign Ministry	27.2.1013, at the Norwegian Ambassador's residence in Budapest, Hungary
H.E. Mrs. Biserka Benisheva	Ambassador of the Republic of Bulgaria to Hungary	Former Director General for European Affairs in the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, former Ambassador of the Republic of Bulgaria to the Republic of Ireland, former Deputy Head of Mission/Permanent Representative with the rank of Ambassador in the Bulgarian Delegation to the European Union, as well as member of the negotiating team in the EU negotiations of Bulgaria	26.2.2013, at the Bulgarian Embassy in Budapest, Hungary
Mr. Andrew MacDowall	Journalist and political analyst based in Belgrade, covering the Balkans and Eastern Europe, the Middle East and South-East Asia	Former Analyst with Oxford Business Group, a political and market analysis company, previously based in Istanbul, Bucharest and Sofia	20.1.2013, at Mr. MacDowall's private residence, Belgrade, Serbia
H.E. Mr. Einar Bull	Retiree	Former Ambassador/Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Norway to the European Union, former Ambassador of the Kingdom Norway to the Republic of Italy, former Deputy Secretary General of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, various diplomatic postings and experience in the Norwegian Foreign Ministry	4.4.2013 at Mr. Bull's private residence, Oslo, Norway.

information that can potentially identify interviewees that wish to remain anonymous, or even contact details and other forms of information that should be handled with care. In order to carry out the projects in line with Norwegian rules and legislation, as well as ethical guidelines in research, I submitted a research project notification specifying what questions I would ask, and what kind of information would be collected, to the Data Protection Official for Research, the institution responsible for data protection for more than 140 academic institutions in Norway. The project is subject to notification in Norway through the Personal Data Act, as it handles personal information such as names, contact details and occupation. On February 1<sup>st</sup> 2012 the Data Protection Official declared that the project's reported handling of personal information was deemed satisfactory according to the Personal Data Act's § 7 – 27, concluding that the project could be carried out (Personvernombudet for forskning, 2013).

### 3.2.3 The interview guide

As previously noted, the research interviews that were carried out in this study can be described as being something in between the forms of semi-structured and unstructured interviews, two ideal types of qualitative research interviews. Almost all forms of qualitative interviewing will lie somewhere in between these two ideal types (Bryman, 2004:321). The interview guide is less specific than the interview schedule, because the latter is more structured, and it offers rigour instead of flexibility (Bryman, 2004:324). The interview guide was devised to carry out the interview in three parts. The first part was reserved for me to brief the interviewees on the purpose of the thesis, without revealing theory or hypotheses, on their options in terms of anonymity and the use of recorder, and on their rights and terms of consent. This included an agreement in which all direct quotes would require written verification by the interviewees before use. After the formalities had been sorted out, the data collection could begin.

The second part of the interview largely consisted of questions which had been sent in advance to the interviewees, and which they were prepared to answer. These questions were open-ended, meaning that I had designed the questions so that the interviewees were to reply as freely and honestly as possible, without any prior knowledge of the study's theories or hypotheses. The idea in this part is that the interviewees speak as



much as possible, so that their impressions and opinions about the topic are extracted without guiding the informants. The questions had follow-up questions attached for my own personal use, which were employed if the interviewee touched upon the study's hypotheses and special areas of interests. The third part consisted of very direct hypotheses-testing questions that were meant to be a safety mechanism, in order for all the areas to be covered through the interview. If some of the topics outlined in the hypotheses were not mentioned in the second part by the interviewees themselves, I asked a question to make sure the area was covered. In some interviews very few follow-up questions were needed, while in one, almost all were asked in order to capture all the dimensions of the hypotheses. By dividing the interview guide into three sections, I tried to make use of the comparability of the more structured interview, while at the same time having the flexibility of not guiding the interviewees too much in their replies.

#### 3.2.4 Conducting the interviews

All the interviews were recorded with two different recording devices, reducing the risk of technical failure to a minimum. In addition, I took notes during the course of the interviews, so as to more easily manoeuvre in the material later, as well as capture other dimensions of the interview situation, such as follow-up questions and themes that had not been included in the guide on beforehand. I also took notes after the interview about how I felt the interview went, which themes and topics had been discussed, if new themes were brought up, and what the interviewees thought was most important in terms of hypotheses testing. This helped me tremendously when analysing the material at a later stage, and is highly recommended by Bryman in order to enhance the quality of the interview (2004:325). The interviews all took between 45 minutes and 2 hours to conduct, with one interview that was significantly shorter than the rest, and one that was significantly longer. The average time was little over than an hour.

Almost all of the interviewees had asked to be briefed on the themes of the interview for preparation in advance, or to see the research questions on before the interview. As I did not wish to lead them in their answers, and wanted their honest and unbiased opinion on the topics at hand, this represented a dilemma for me. After all, it was

important for me to withdraw the most fruitful answers from the interviews, and for this to be achieved, the interviewees needed some level of preparedness in terms of topics. As a compromise, after being advised by my supervisor, I sent the guide on beforehand, but only the part that had open-ended questions, without the prepared follow-up questions. This meant that I did not send the hypotheses-testing questions, which would indicate the direction of my research project that could possibly bias the interviewees in favour of the study's theoretical explanations. As almost all of the interviewees asked for the interview guide, I decided that all the interviewees were given the selected questions before the interview, so they would all have the same level of preparedness and their answers could more easily be compared.

### 3.2.5 Managing the data collection

All interviews were recorded, and the informants agreed to this in the consent form. For those who chose partial anonymity, they verbally notified me of this during the course of the interview when touching upon specific topics where they wished not to be quoted. This only happened once, and the interviewee was anonymously quoted. I then made a note of this in my written notes. The digital audio files were stored in two copies, one on my computer and one on an external hard drive.

The recordings all added up to over seven hours of audio data, which represented a huge challenge in terms of transcription. As many researchers recommend, it is useful to transcribe the interviews in order to ensure the correctness of the data, before analysing it. However, as Bryman points out, this is very time-consuming, and is much more difficult than just writing down what is being said. One should at least plan 5-6 hours of transcription time for each hour of recorded data, without counting the hours of organizing and analysing the data (Kvale, 1997; Bryman, 2004:331).

This is a common problem for researchers who make use of the qualitative research interview. Therefore, after consultation with my supervisor and the research literature, I decided to only partially transcribe some of the interviews I had, and to employ a method for categorizing the answers in relation to my hypotheses without transcribing all the full answers. The very nature of qualitative interviews, as in my interviews,

opens up for rich detailed answers, as interviewees are encouraged to talk as much as possible. This means that many of the answers you record are not necessarily useful for your project, as was the case with my interviews. Enlargement is a very technical and all-consuming process for member states, and therefore the informants often had answers that were less relevant, or even irrelevant to my research question. Bryman suggests that transcription can selectively be carried out, meaning that transcription is only carried out on the relevant parts of the interview (Bryman, 2004:332). This hurts the reliability of the project, but considering the time-consuming activity to transcribe information that was not going to be utilized anyway, I chose to only transcribe the useful parts.

### 3.3 Method of analysis

After the successful transcription and recording of data material, the replies given by the interviewees was categorized by specific topic, hypotheses and statement. For example, a reply given by an interviewee about the Kosovo war's implications for EU enlargement was shortened to capture the essence of the statement, whether or not the person thinks this mattered or not in regards to the research question, and the statements relevance to support, reject or refine the hypotheses. After the categorization was done, the data material will be presented and discussed in chapters 4 and 5 of this thesis. The existing research literature on the topic will be widely utilized to back up or refute claims, and strengthen our insight into the topics at hand. Findings will deal with the decision and process separately, and address the topics projected by the hypotheses, and what the interviewees thought important themselves.

### 3.4 Validity, reliability and generalization

*Reliability* is a difficult criterion to meet for qualitative researchers, as it refers to the degree to which a study can be replicated and correct measurement (Bryman, 2004:273). Replication is difficult for two reasons, as I must take into account the protection of the individuals and their participation in this study, which affects the way I store and use my data, and the fact that freezing a social setting is difficult (Bryman, 2004:273). In order to ensure reliability, I recorded and transcribed the interviews, so

measurement would be as accurate as possible. I also validated the quotes with the respondents before use, to ensure that I understood them correctly, made the list of respondents public in full understanding with the interviewees, and will quote them with name when possible. To be certain that distortion of quotes did not take place in translation, as two interviews were carried out in Norwegian, these two interviewees validated their own quotes after the translation to English had taken place.

*Validity* incorporates both internal and external validity. Internal validity is a strength of the case study, as it offers insight to causal mechanisms (Gerring, 2007:43). These strengths have been addressed earlier in the chapter. In order to strengthen the internal validity of the study further, a method of triangulation was employed, meaning that alternative sources, such as EU documents, news articles and statements from decision-maker was also drawn upon, in addition to the existing literature and interviews. By triangulating the sources and data, as well as validating the quotes with the interviewees before utilizing them, one can draw inferences of a higher quality (Bryman, 2004:274, 275). A challenge for the case study is external validity, as the findings of a single case study may not be generalized over a population of similar cases (Gerring, 2007:43). This study choose explanatory richness and the ability of drawing strong causal mechanisms over the ability to generalize in a trade-off (Gerring, 2007:43). When interpreting the findings of this study, it must be kept in mind that the findings do not necessarily mean that the conclusions are valid for other CEECs, but that findings in this case may provide grounds for fruitful testing of hypotheses and theories at a later stage.

## 4 The security rationale behind the decision to enlarge to Bulgaria

This chapter will analyse the data material and relevant literature in the light of the hypotheses concerning democratic peace and the geopolitical approach in the EU's decision to enlarge to Bulgaria. First, the policy tools of the European Union will be accounted for, especially membership conditionality and the Union's power of attraction. Special emphasis will be placed on how the Union utilizes enlargement as a policy tool in order to bring about certain outcomes that the Union desires. After the explanation of conditionality, the hypotheses will be tested through application to the data material, when it comes to *the decision* to enlarge to Bulgaria. This will be done in parts, by looking at the evidence in each theme that came up during the interviews regarding the decision to enlarge.

The chapter will conclude with some preliminary findings and their implications for theory, namely that the utility dimension of democratic peace theory and a rationalist geopolitical approach both find support in the evidence. However, as will be argued in the concluding chapter, democratic peace theory projects a one-dimensional aspect of security, and does not fully take into account the security issues in which the EU had interests, other than conflict prevention. The rationalist geopolitical approach finds much broader support in the evidence, as security issues are multi-dimensional in EU enlargement. In addition, the case for a normative dimension of democratic peace theory only finds marginal support in the empirical evidence, and will be discussed in the concluding sub-chapter.

### 4.1 Enlargement as a policy tool – membership conditionality and power of attraction

Since the last stages of the 2004 enlargement, commonly referred to as 'the Big Bang Enlargement', the enlargement of the European Union has been frequently referred to as the Union's 'most powerful foreign policy tool' by both academics and EU officials (Sedelmeier, 2010:421). Sedelmeier writes that through the last two rounds of

enlargement, enlargement can broadly be described as a policy tool in two ways: Firstly, because it “anchors the fragile democracies that have emerged from authoritarian rule within a prosperous and democratic international community” (Sedelmeier, 2010:421). Secondly, it can be understood as a policy tool because the EU makes strategic use of the incentive of membership “in order to induce or preserve specific policy changes in non-member states” (Sedelmeier, 2010:421).

The latter function is what is generally referred to as ‘accession conditionality’. Conditionality ties the reward of membership to conditions that acceding states have to meet before accession can take place. This can “change the incentive structure for candidate countries in such a way as to trigger domestic changes that the member states desire” (Sedelmeier, 2010:421). This power over the acceding countries comes from the EU’s ‘power of attraction’, meaning that as long as the EU is an attractive organization for potential member states to join, they will be able to exert considerable influence over the acceding countries (Smith, 2011:300). This implies coercive power that may still be described as civilian, meaning that the EU member states may punish unwanted behaviour by the use of ‘sticks’, e.g. postponement of membership or other coercive options, or rewarding wanted behaviour ‘carrots’, such as granting membership negotiations, closing negotiation chapters, or awarding membership to countries that reform and meet the accession criteria.

Decisions of enlargement was an evolving process in the case of the CEECs, as the former communist countries wanted clear perspectives on membership after the fall of communism in the early 1990’s. Their wish for membership talks and eventual accession became impossible to resist for EU member states, which in 1993 at the Copenhagen Council opened for membership for those countries who fully met certain criteria, namely the Copenhagen criteria (Smith, 2011:304; Tatham, 2009:87). The Copenhagen criteria were the basic accession criteria for new member states, including Bulgaria. It states that member countries must achieve:

- Stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and respect and protection of minorities<sup>4</sup>;
- A functioning market economy with the capacity to cope with competitive pressures and market forces in the EU<sup>5</sup>;
- The ability to take on the obligations of EU membership including adherence to the aims of economic and political union (the *acquis communautaire*)<sup>6</sup>

(Smith, 2011:306)

Through the application of these criteria as a prerequisite for membership, the Union wields the power to induce wanted behaviour and reforms from the acceding states that wish to join. As the chapter will show, it has been wielded in order to boost the security of the Union through the democratization of Bulgaria, and including Bulgaria in the security community, but also for other security-related purposes.

## 4.2 Extending the ‘Security Community’

To which degree was the conflict prevention a basic reason for the enlargement to Bulgaria? If any security rationale of the EU enlargement finds support in the existing research literature, it is this one, as the EU is, by and large, considered a security community (Schwok, 1999:154, 155; O'Brennan, 2006a:159, 160; Buzan and Wæver, 2003:375; Kavalski, 2008:43). Stefanova writes:

It is a widely held proposition that the history of the European Union represents a security community, which continuously extends the zone of peace in Europe. The eastward enlargement is currently the principal mode institutionalizing this process.

(Stefanova, 2005:53)

The rationale that the geographical area of the EU represents a zone of peace and stability was reflected by almost all of the interviewees, in some form or another, and Bulgaria's membership bid was viewed as an extension of this security community to a

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<sup>4</sup> Hereafter referred to as 'the political criteria'

<sup>5</sup> Hereafter referred to as 'the economic criteria'

<sup>6</sup> Hereafter referred to as the '*acquis communautaire*' or simply 'the *acquis*'.

new territory. First of all, Bulgaria's membership in the EU was viewed as a deterrent for future conflict, and a continuation of the EU's peace project through the democratization of Bulgaria, as well as of the process of establishing complex, and primarily economic, interdependence between the current and new EU member countries and Bulgaria. This was carried out primarily to avoid future conflict and instability. Ambassador Benisheva, a former negotiator for Bulgaria in their EU membership negotiations and Bulgaria's former ambassador to the EU, reflected that enlargement was a tool for member states to advance the values of the Union and liberal democracy through conditionality and the Copenhagen criteria. She said, when asked why enlargement to Bulgaria took place:

(...) this was the reunification of Europe. This is the reason why first the Europe agreements were signed with these countries (...) and then in 1993 the Copenhagen Council defined the accession criteria. The accession criteria, if you look at the details, you have the whole process in four paragraphs. The political criteria, and that is actually a translation of the values from the treaty, is actually the political criteria for the applicants. And that's very clear. Stability of institutions, democracy, rule of law, respect for HR, protection of minorities. And these are the values on which the European Union is founded. And that was the motivation for reform, in all the CEECs (...) You extend the area of values and democracy to project stability and security, and not leave it (Bulgaria) in a grey area.

(Benisheva, 2013)

The logic of consequentiality and the expectations of an empirical relationship between the effects of membership, the internalization of liberal democratic values through the accession criteria on one hand and the utility of peace, security and stability on the other, is evident in this statement. Ambassador Benisheva also underlined the very reason for enlarging to the CEECs, including Bulgaria, that is was to extend the zone of security, peace and stability through the application of the criteria and the integration of Bulgaria into the European Community (Benisheva, 2013). This was the very rationale behind the decision to enlarge, according to the ambassador, and had less to do with economics or duty, it was security dimension that prevailed in deciding whether or not to enlarge:



(...) it was a political project. It was not just another enlargement. This means that the economic considerations did not prevail at that time. Of course the extension of the market and the addition of new consumers, but it was not the prevailing argument. The prevailing argument was the political one. It was the reunification, and the extension of the area of security and stability to another region. And that counts for all the applicants, not just Bulgaria.

(Benisheva, 2013)

Thus, the extension of norms and values of liberal democracy was an important incentive, because it secures stability and peace, according to Ambassador Benisheva. This notion was reflected in many of the interviews, though not all. Former Norwegian ambassador to the EU, Ambassador Bull, when asked if the integration, democratization and establishment of many-sided relations between states was an incentive, emphasized that economic interdependence was the very foundation of the EU, as it is a peace project:

The whole starting point of the EU was 'never again war in Europe', getting Germany and France into a structured cooperation, getting the economic cooperation working, and creating economic interdependence.

(Bull, 2013)

Such a view corresponds well with Erik Holm's statement "it cannot be repeated often enough: the *raison d'être* of the European project is to maintain stability, peace and prosperity in Europe" (Stefanova, 2005:51). The idea of extending the peace project to new member countries was indeed found in the recollection of the other interviewees (Bull, 2013; Skarstein, 2013; Benisheva, 2013; Popova, 2013; MacDowall, 2013). The expected outcome of peace was not only argued to be a direct result of the spread of values, but also as a direct consequence of many-sided and primarily economic relations with the countries:

There was a security-political aspect; the more these countries (Bulgaria and Romania) are integrated in the EU, and a part of the EU's integration project, the more security and stability it will give to an area that has always been unstable.... So enlargement is a part of the EU's peace thinking, the peace project. You achieve peace and stability through

economic integration. (...)The economic agenda supports the peace project (...) The overall idea for the EU is that one cannot achieve peace, stability and security in Europe with a divided Europe. Neither geographically nor economically speaking.

(Skarstein, 2013)

In fact, former Norwegian ambassador to Bulgaria Tove Skarstein's statement exemplifies an important trend in the interviews: Even stronger than the logic of spreading norms and values, was the economic dimension and the establishment of direct many-sided relations between the countries. Bulgaria as such is not a special case out of the group of countries in the Eastern enlargement, when talking about spreading liberal democratic values and norms, and establishing many-sided relations between the countries. In fact, almost all the informants spoke very generally about the Eastern enlargement as extending the security community, without special emphasis on Bulgaria per say. However, Bulgaria stood out as a necessary enlargement, primarily because of its geographical location and proximity to unstable countries during the course of the decision-making procedures.

#### 4.2.1 Regional stability

Bulgaria's location in Europe is, as will be argued in chapter 4.3, is generally seen as an advantage for the Union members by many of the interviewees, and is said to be of strategic value. However, while Bulgaria borders Romania in the north, Greece in the south, and Turkey in the southeast, it borders Macedonia and Serbia in the west. Through its proximity to the Western Balkans, Bulgaria was affected by the break-up of Yugoslavia, and the recurring crises of ethnic violence in the region through the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Pantev, 2008:102). The Western Balkans demonstrated the volatile nature of relations between the countries of the region, and confirmed the view of the regions as one of historical grievances on territorial borders, the treatment of ethnic minorities, and the lack of governance capacity to handle such issues (O'Brennan, 2006b:126, 127). How did Bulgaria's geographical proximity to the conflict-ridden region of the Western Balkans play in to the decision-making processes going on, on whether or not to enlarge to Bulgaria?

First, it can be argued that the EU had little incentive for enlarging to a troubled neighbourhood. Potential spill-over effects of conflicts may affect the Union's member countries if they are close to the conflict, making the EU cautious of enlargement (O'Brennan, 2006b:127). On the other hand, there

seems to be a consensus in the political and academic world: the pan-European effects of regional conflicts and instability mean that the medium- and long-term stabilization of Southeastern Europe is in Europe's foreign, stability and security policy interests.

(Varwick, 2000:157)

In other words, the Union both feared enlargement to unstable regions, but also had incentives to stabilize the very same regions, because it counters the very threats it fears. The logic of caution was only reflected by one of the interviewees when discussing the significance of the Western Balkan conflicts. Former Foreign Minister of Bulgaria, Dr. Solomon Passy, explained, when asked how the Western Balkans affected Bulgaria's membership bid in the Union: "I'm sure that that if you're coming from a troublesome region, this makes your task more difficult, not easier." (Passy, 2013).

The other interviewees, on the other hand, all expressed the need for projecting stability into this troublesome region, and emphasized that Bulgaria's enlargement to the EU would do just that. Referring to the outbreak of ethnic violence in the early 1990s, and the wars after the independence of Bosnia Herzegovina, Slovenia, Croatia, and Macedonia through 1992-93, Ambassador Benisheva said that the EU had a direct interest in stabilizing the region, and that this strengthened the rationale for enlargement which came up at the Copenhagen Council in 1993:

(...) the political instability of the region was a major concern at the time (...) after the crisis in the former Yugoslavia. And when you have this enclave of instability, then you surround it with stability to handle the issue.

(Benisheva, 2013)

Ambassador Bull expressed much of the same logic, saying that:

(...) the Balkans was an unstable corner of Europe, and projecting stability into this region has been a primary concern for a long time. When the developments unfolded in the former Yugoslavia, it was quite difficult to handle, and the EU did not handle it particularly well. Then you got that experience. Therefore the political incentives came in the direction of incorporating these countries into a system, and it was claimed on both sides that this was the only way of stabilizing the political conditions, by giving them this carrot and letting them join the Community. Or you risked having new Yugoslavian conditions on your hands, and a lot of this was behind the decision.

(Bull, 2013)

In this way, the rationale behind enlargement to Bulgaria in terms of projecting stability is the same as the utilitarian expectations of democratic peace, and the regional stability was significant in the original decision to enlarge. Mrs. Popova, former long-time Foreign affairs adviser to the former President of Bulgaria, H.E. Mr. Georgi Parvanov, put special emphasis on this, and said that the regional stability of the Balkans may even have been the primary reason for including Bulgaria and Romania in the enlargement rounds in the first place:

Security incentives were very important. Having in mind the process in former Yugoslavia. The beginning of the 1990s a very complicated process started there. This was a very strong reason to enlarge to Bulgaria. To ensure regional stability, because we [Bulgaria] are very close to Europe. The attitude towards the Central European countries have always been more positive, than towards Bulgaria and Romania.

(Popova, 2013)

Ambassador Bull's and Ambassador Benisheva's, as well as Mrs. Popova's comments do not only imply that enlargement to the countries in close proximity to the unstable regions would increase security, and that this was an important incentive, but they also imply that the events demanded response in a timely fashion. Ambassador Skarstein reflected the same, and told me that the experience from the Bosnia crisis was that conflicts easily spill over to neighbouring countries, and that the influx of refugees from Bosnia to the West was an example of this (Skarstein, 2013). This was also the case for

the Kosovo crisis, which strengthened the need for including Bulgaria and Romania in the fold, as will be discussed in the next chapter. Indeed, the Kosovo crises and geopolitical aspects did not only reinforce the rationale for including Bulgaria in the Union, but significantly altered the Union's approach to enlargement to Bulgaria.

### 4.3 Bulgaria's geographical location and its significance for membership

As noted in previous chapters, the geopolitical analysis of the EU and its enlargement policies has been lacking (Hill, 2002:98). The study of geographical factors and their impact on the EU have seen little attention given the fact that the EU effectively incorporate large territories, shores, infrastructure and resources into their own political union and internal market. So to which degree did the geographical location of Bulgaria matter for Union members in deciding whether or not to enlarge? Dr. Passy was undoubtedly sure during our interview when asked what Bulgaria brought to the table that made enlargement attractive for the Union. He replied: "We brought the Black Sea ... My impulsive answer is the Black Sea" (Passy, 2013). Geopolitical factors seemed to matter quite a lot for the union in enlargement, and the favourable geographical location of Bulgaria was no different, as the interviewees made quite clear that this was undoubtedly important for Bulgaria's accession to the Union. Ambassador Skarstein told me that "... a very important aspect was the opportunity for the EU and NATO to get to the Black Sea. Bulgaria and Romania has a strategic location, politically and economically speaking." (Skarstein, 2013).

Why was this important? Two different types of reasoning came through during the interviews, as both economic perspectives and security perspectives mattered, according to the interviewees. The economic argument concerns the ability to access markets and develop infrastructure in order to efficiently boost trade relations and secure supplies of imports. Ambassador Benisheva said that:

The decision to enlarge to Bulgaria and Romania was not only the region, but also the geographical location, because the Union was extending its borders to the Black Sea, and then access to the next geographical regions, of Asia and the Caucasus. So it was not only regional, but also geopolitical reasoning behind the decision. Which is also economically motivated.

(Benisheva, 2013)

Extending the territory of the Union to Bulgaria, and also Romania, was, according to some of the informants, a goal in itself, in economic and strategic terms. The former Foreign Minister of Bulgaria, Dr. Passy, told me that keeping Bulgaria out of enlargement would not make sense geographically speaking, as that would leave a gap between the newly acceded EU state of Hungary and EU member Greece:

If you look at the map, it was absolutely illogical to keep Greece isolated from the rest of Europe. If Greece is Europe, and Hungary is Europe... There is no reason to keep a blank spot between Hungary and Greece.

(Passy, 2013)

The logic behind this, he explained, much as with NATO, is that having continuous geographical expansion is pareto-optimal in terms of costs, and serves long-term strategic benefits to the Union. While it is easier to defend a common border, as was the logic of NATO enlargement, and a solid piece of land, it is also cheaper in terms of infrastructure to have continuous geographic space (Passy, 2013; Skarstein, 2013). The rationale also makes sense in terms of the enlargement of the Schengen territory, where internal border controls are abolished, and external border control of the Schengen space is strengthened. "It is a win-win game." said Dr. Passy (Passy, 2013). This rationale is also reflected in some of the literature. Plamen Pantev writes that

(...) as an EU member, the Black Sea state of Bulgaria will help fill the geopolitical gap between Hungary and Greece, and further solidify the 'arc of stability' in Southeast Europe.

(2008:101).

### 4.3.1 Energy security and the geopolitical incentives

Bulgaria's location carries enormous importance in one particular area of comprehensive security, and that is energy security. The issue has seen increasing importance on the EU's security agenda, and is cited in the EU's Security Strategy as a special security challenge for the Union's citizens and industries (Solana, 2003). Energy security must be seen in connection to the Russian influence in the Black Sea region, as there are fears that Russia will blackmail European countries by the threat of shutting off supplies (Cameron, 2010). In terms of geopolitical consequences of enlargement, few have had such impact on the security of the EU as energy dependency, as almost all of the acceded CEECs have an unfavourable dependency on single-source natural gas imports from Russia. In this way, the Eastern enlargements of the Union in 2004 and 2007 have significantly worsened the energy security of the EU, and increased the need for enhancing it (Buchan, 2010:368; Belyi, 2003:357).

Bulgaria is no exception to this trend. Out of all the candidate countries for membership in 1998, Bulgaria was 99,7 % dependent on gas imports, and especially Russian natural gas (Belyi, 2003:357). Enlargement to Bulgaria therefore significantly worsens the EU's dependency on imports of Russian natural gas. The 2006 and 2009 gas disputes between Russia and the Ukraine saw that through shutting down the gas supplies for the Ukraine, Eastern European countries, as well as Bulgaria, was deeply affected by natural gas shortage (BBC News Online, 2009). The disputes at the time were thought to be much more political than economic in nature, and gave fears that Russia could exert considerable influence through their power of dependency (Bradshaw, 2009:1930; Cameron, 2010). So how did energy security play into the decision to enlarge to Bulgaria?

Paradoxically, while the EU suffers greater dependency on foreign imports of single-sourced natural gas from Russia through enlargement to Bulgaria, some of the interviewees argued that increasing energy security served as an incentive for enlargement to Bulgaria. Short-term risks were, to some extent, accepted for long-term benefits, as the largest diversification projects run through Bulgarian territory. As figure 4.3.1 shows, both the planned Nabucco and the South Stream pipelines run through the country. While the Nabucco pipeline project is the EU-backed proposal for diversifying

energy imports by transiting from the Caspian Sea from non-Russian gas hubs, South Stream is the Russian alternative for the new southern corridor that bypasses the Ukraine (Cameron, 2010; Pantev, 2008:107).



Figure 4.3.1: Natural gas pipelines in Europe (from Bradshaw, 2009:1929).

These projects according to Ambassador Skarstein, were a significant incentive for enlargement:

One should not discount the necessity of bringing these two countries (Bulgaria and Romania) into the European Community because it was already clear that the large energy infrastructure projects would go through their territories from east to west. It is clear that large investments, such as energy supply routes demand; require long-term stability and a politically predictable environment in the countries, and EU and NATO-membership functions as a guarantee for this. So the energy aspect, even though it has never really openly been discussed, must have been significant, I think, because they were looking ahead.

(Skarstein, 2013)



Several others supported this claim and the need for diversification as an incentive for enlargement to Bulgaria. Ambassador Benisheva told me about the impact of energy that

... it was also an important incentive, definitely, not only [for] goods and services, but also the energy infrastructure. It was clear that the economy of the Union needed diversification of energy supplies, using alternative supply routes.

(Benisheva, 2013)

So there seems to be a somewhat ambiguous case for energy security in enlargement. While in the short term, one might run expenses and risks as disruptions in energy supply could very well have serious security implications for citizens in the EU, as they did in 2006 and 2009; there are indeed strategic interests in the long term. However, not all of the interviewees placed much emphasis on the subject. While some placed emphasis on the long-term energy security interests of the EU in enlargement (Skarstein, 2013; Benisheva, 2013; Popova, 2013; MacDowall, 2013), others were more careful in their assessment of the long-term interests.

I believe it had some influence at the time, but it really escalated later, with the situations where Russia cut off supplies to Eastern Europe over the squabbles with the Ukraine, and after the new findings of natural gas in Azerbaijan, having a diversifying route that does not cross Russian territory.

(Bull, 2013)

In summary, there seems to have been a priority for the Union to enlarge to Bulgaria in order to have the possibility of boosting its own energy, and making sure they had influence in the planned infrastructure projects. In the long-term, this might help reduce the EU's dependency on Russian natural gas, a vital policy for minimizing Russian influence in Europe.

#### 4.4 Containing Russian influence in Bulgaria

An assumption according to some scholars concerning enlargement to CEECs in power-structural terms, as well as security-politically, was that after the fall of the Soviet Union

and the regime-changes in the CEECs, the European Union enlarged in order to contain Russian influence in these countries, and make sure that they aligned with the West. Leon Brittan, former Commissioner for External Relations, argued in 1994 that if the acceding countries which had concluded Europe agreements did not receive a clear promise of accession, they would fall under Russian influence (Higashino, 2004:356). Karen Smith writes that in the early days of enlargement decision-making, in the run-up towards the Copenhagen Council of 1993, Russia's more assertive politics towards the former communist countries "sparked fears that Russia might try to re-establish a sphere of influence in Eastern Europe" (Smith, 2004:107, 108). Indeed, the EU and Russia can be argued to be, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, as potential security threats to each other, and competitors in power-structural terms (O'Brennan, 2006b:124). The weakness and potential instability of the Russian regime, and the perceived strengthened nationalism gave worries that the Russians might try to re-establish their empire (O'Brennan, 2006a:165, 166).

So how would enlargement counter the perceived Russian threat? René Schwok puts emphasis on the fact that a broad alignment with the West for CEECs would be a potential scare-off for Russia to exert pressure towards the countries, because it would involve "locking horns with the West" (Schwok, 1999:158). However, such arguments are unfounded, he argues, as Russia did not show any imperialist intentions over the past decade. In addition, he argues that containing Russia would not make sense, because the EU would, by admitting the CEECs, also take responsibility for any problems that arose with Russia in these countries. If enlargement is a response to the very weakness of the Russian regime, it is difficult to understand how the enlargement would counter such a development inside Russia (Schwok, 1999:158, 159).

In the light of the disagreement portrayed in the literature, it is interesting to examine the evidence in the case of Bulgaria, because it strongly confirms the fact that preventing Russian influence was a key incentive for member states in their decision to enlarge, and especially from the non-Bulgarian interviewees. Mr. MacDowall, an experienced journalist and analyst of Bulgaria, the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe, described that the decision to enlarge eastwards was also justified by the wish "to bring countries such as Bulgaria and other Eastern European countries out of the

Russian orbit.” (MacDowall, 2013). The diplomats put even stronger emphasis on this type of reasoning. Ambassador Bull described the EU’s reaction as he recalled it from his ambassadorship in Brussels:

We had the fall of the Soviet Union, and a vacuum emerged. How were we supposed to handle that? If they became a member of the EU, they would be able to develop democratic institutions much faster. The membership creates democracy and growth, and there is a common interest in this. This was urgent, because we did not know when Russia would get back on its feet. Russia had collapsed and was going through a very dramatic period at the time, and in this period it was important to act quickly. The Russians were clearly not happy with the development that had taken place when they got back on their feet.

(Bull, 2013)

The ambassador’s recollection fits well with the other interviews that were carried out, where almost all of them claimed this a primary cause for enlargement to the CEECs in general, but also to Bulgaria especially, because of the nature of the historic Russian-Bulgarian relationship. Dr. Passy told me that “Bulgaria was known to be the closest ally of the Soviet Union”, and Mrs. Popova added that Bulgaria has always had a strong relationship to Russia, because Russia liberated Bulgaria from the Ottoman Empire (Passy, 2013; Popova, 2013). There were even fears that if Bulgaria was held back from EU membership for too long, Bulgaria might be pressured by Russia to join a ‘counter-alliance’ (Smith, 2004:141)

What is most interesting about the statements regarding the need for containing Russian influence, and bringing these countries out of the Russian orbit was the *urgency* that can be found in the statements. Reflecting Ambassador Bull’s thoughts on the need to move quickly while the Russians had limited abilities to act, Ambassador Skarstein added that:

A very important reason was to get (Bulgaria and Romania) away from Russian influence. (...) They had a window of opportunity, because there was little Russia could do about it at the time. If you were to enlarge, it was advantageous that it was while Russia was still weak.

(Skarstein, 2013)

Ambassador Benisheva confirmed that this was a major concern, when asked if containing Russian influence served as a reason for enlargement, and cited that the decision to open negotiations with Bulgaria in 1999 was not only justified because of the situation in Kosovo, but also on the grounds of the Russian invasion that was going on in Chechnya: “Yes. That was why I mentioned the decision in 1999, not only Kosovo, but also Chechnya. It could destabilize Georgia, and we are on the other side of the Black sea” (Benisheva, 2013).

In summary, there seems to be a strong rationale for enlargement in order to contain Russian influence in Bulgaria in the empirical evidence, despite the research literature, which says that such a perceived structural threat should not be exaggerated. The risk of non-enlargement seemed too great, according to Ambassador Bull, who reflected that for the Union, this was the primary reason for enlargement eastwards, not only in the case of Bulgaria: “It was crucial, seen through the ‘eyes of the Cold War’ ... absolutely crucial. It was the old way of thinking that dominated.” (Bull, 2013). Ambassador Skarstein emphasized the connection of Russian influence with other distinct security issues, namely organized crime and corruption, as well as energy security and power-structural competition. There was a distinct need, according to Ambassador Skarstein, to limit Russian influence by reforming the old the internal security structures in Bulgaria, which were closely linked to transnational organized crime, as well as ensure energy security and limit Russian influence in power-structural competition (Skarstein, 2013).

## 4.5 The internal dimension of external security in enlargement to Bulgaria

The nature of EU enlargement is truly geographical, as it moves the borders of an internal market and the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice. The extension of the Union to new geographical regions, offer both challenges and opportunities of a geographical nature to the Community in the security realm, as the lines between

internal and external security are becoming increasingly blurred (Ibraymova, 2004a:2). According to the comprehensive security concept, threats to modern communities that are open are often different than military threats by the fact that they are societal, environmental, human or individual in nature. In the European Union, this is especially true, as markets are open; the flow of merchandise, people and services is free between member countries. Through the integration of the European Union's political cooperation, Justice and Home Affairs<sup>7</sup>, or the intergovernmental area of Freedom, Security and Justice, remains a vital part of the political union.

Enlargement in the light of internal security remains a dilemma, because it both increases the ability to respond to threats efficiently while exposing the Union to threats at the same time (Friis, 1998:17). By implementing the *acquis* in new member states, and applying conditionality to enhance the rule of law, fight corruption and organized crime, the Union may respond to the challenges more effectively, and their influence is substantial. However, one also risks, especially in regards to premature enlargement without proper fulfilment of the criteria, of internalizing the very same threats that enlargement was supposed to deal effectively with (Ibraymova, 2004b:6). This represents the dilemma of internal security in the JHA arena of enlargement. The principal mode through which the Union tries to handle threats which are transnational in nature, such as human trafficking, organized crime and smuggling, is through the transposition of the *acquis communautaire* in acceding member countries, as well as the maintenance of high standards in terms of rule of law, the fight against corruption and organized crime, and border security (Ibraymova, 2004a:6, 7).

As Bulgaria acceded the Union, their readiness in terms of fighting organized crime and corruption, as well as their ability to ensure the proper rule of law, was uncertain to the degree that the EU Commission established a special mechanism to ensure progress in their reform efforts (The EU Commission, 2006). While other CEECs reached high rankings on the Transparency International Corruption Index and in the fight against organized crime, Bulgaria ranked at the same level of Colombia in 2006 in terms of level

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<sup>7</sup> Hereafter referred to as 'JHA'

of corruption, and the impact of organized crime remained severe (Moravcsik, 2006). The European Security Strategy identifies organized crime as a serious threat to European security, saying that:

Europe is a prime target for organised crime. This internal threat to our security has an important external dimension: cross-border trafficking in drugs, women, illegal migrants and weapons accounts for a large part of the activities of criminal gangs. It can have links with terrorism.

(Solana, 2003)

Thus, the security rationale of enlargement is now much wider in scope than a focus on military affairs, and is one where the Union has capabilities, as where NATO does not. As Heather Grabbe writes: “For western Europe, the fear of tanks and missiles arriving from across the Iron curtain has been supplanted by fear of uncontrolled immigration and cross-border crime.” (Grabbe, 2000:520).

Few countries faced such severe internal security challenges before accession as Bulgaria and Romania. The doubts of their readiness were evident at the point of accession, and the Commission’s mechanism confirmed the worries. The interviewees were more cautious in terms of labelling enlargement as a handling of internal security threats for the Union, because the proposal is two-sided. There was little doubt that they thought that there were clear signs that the EU had internalized some very serious threats to internal security. Ambassador Benisheva admitted as much, as we approached the subject of transnational crime and corruption in our interview: “We have discussed the geographical argument as an argument in favour, and now we discuss it as an argument against”, clearly stating that the evident threat of cross-border organized crime and corruption was a cost for member countries in the case of accession (Benisheva, 2013).

Mr. MacDowall expressed the same, when I asked him how the fight against transnational crime played into the decision: “It may have been a factor in the calculations, but whether much progress has been made is extremely debatable” (MacDowall, 2013). However, some of the informants expressed the opinion that these threats would exist

even if the EU did not enlarge to Bulgaria, and that the membership process, as well as conditionality, has handled the issue to a much larger extent than if they had been kept out. Mrs. Popova told me that enlargement to Bulgaria has a disciplinary effect on acceding member states (Popova, 2013). Mr. MacDowall echoed this description, and highlighted that the threats would remain in a non-enlargement scenario:

Drugs, guns, people were going to come through Bulgaria and Romania any way, so I think that if they hadn't had the EU stick and carrot, that the flow would be even higher than it is, because of the resources that the EU has given them to manage their borders and the incentive to crack down on these sort of things that the EU has provided. (...) It could have been worse.

(MacDowall, 2013)

Dr. Passy described the same, when asked if Bulgaria had done enough in terms of battling corruption and organized crime before the accession, and if they were let in too early:

Dr. Passy: The earlier the better. Because the earlier you invite them in, the more time they get to change. There are forces inside the country who do not want Bulgaria to join. Leaving them out could strengthen them. It is easier to change inside the Union than outside.

Q: Would you say that leaving them out could have negative consequences?

Dr. Passy: Absolutely. Leaving them out would be counter-productive. (...) Today, they speak about corruption, but today the level of corruption, if you compare it to 15 years ago, it is much better today. This is to a great extent because of our membership in the European Union.

(Passy, 2013)

Thus, it seems that when facing the dilemma of internal security, the EU chose to handle the situation from within, exerting its influence through enlargement, in spite of the costs associated. Ambassador Benisheva reflected the same kind of arguments and made the point that some of these trans-national smuggling routes can be traced back to

the boycott of the Milosevic regime, when the economic activity was suspended, and added: “Including will help much more than excluding. Because that is the extension of security, making the territory [Bulgaria] a part of the common security concern” (Benisheva, 2013). In this way, by bringing Bulgaria in, and exerting influence through the *acquis* and enhancing Bulgaria’s ability to handle these threats, enlargement boosts Europe’s ability to handle such threats. Ambassador Skarstein expressed doubts that extending the candidate period, or of pursuing further conditionality at the time would help much in tackling the issue:

My diplomat colleagues in Sofia told me that they were aware of the challenges in advance (...) Only the EU can do something about Bulgaria ... They will never be able to handle it [these threats] on their own. You need constant pressure from the EU... But for the EU, they were balancing in their approach, and I do not think that they would have gotten much further, at least not a lot further in a year more, and I’m am absolutely not sure if they would have made more progress with an open accession date... Look at Turkey, they have lost all motivation.

(Skarstein, 2013)

Thus, as Ambassador Skarstein emphasized, the other worries of the EU, and their balancing in the approach towards enlargement, called for action, even if that meant giving up conditionality. In addition, the Union still preserve some powers of conditionality in this particular area, and still tries to exert its influence to respond to internal threats in these countries, and pacify others in their accession conditions. First of all, the establishment of the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism<sup>8</sup> is designed to keep up pressure on Bulgaria, and to ensure that progress is done on the issues of organized crime, corruption and rule of law (The EU Commission, 2006). Secondly, Schengen membership is still pending for Bulgaria and Romania, meaning that they are still outside the common border. The Schengen *acquis* is a crucial part of the transposition of the EU *acquis*, as it aims to ensure high standards at the outer border of the EU, and facilitate police and internal security cooperation. The EU member

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<sup>8</sup> Hereafter referred to as ‘CVM’. The Commission established a surveillance mechanism for Bulgaria, citing a lack of progress in terms of fulfilling the criteria. This mechanism will be accounted for in the next chapter.



countries have vetoed their accession on what many would call political grounds, in spite of technical readiness (EurActiv, 2011b). Many now suspect a link between membership in Schengen to the progress under the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism, though this is unofficial. So the Union is suspected to continue to exert conditionality for Schengen membership instead of EU membership. This point will be discussed in the next chapter. Thirdly, the Union addressed the concerns over immigration, delaying the freedom of workers from Bulgaria and Romania, a freedom of the internal market that member countries are at liberty to limit if they wish for up till seven years, based on concerns of the disruptiveness in the national labour markets, by the import of low-cost workers (The EU Commission, 2013). The threat of mass immigration was pacified for some time and comes into full force in 2014, postponing the cost of accession for some time after 2007.

## 4.6 Adding weight to the EU's power

Traditional realist assumptions about incentives in enlargement were evident in the discussion of some themes, and less so when discussing others. A core assumption of EU enlargement in realist terms is that the EU adds weight to their own power in international affairs by including more members (Schwok, 1999:161; Zielonka, 2006:49). This is a disputable claim, because it is evident that far from all member states want the EU to become a super-state (Schwok, 1999:161). However, a want for more structural power might motivate the EU in terms of taking in new members. With more power, and more countries dedicated to the pursuit of EU foreign policy goals, the Union will have more of a 'say-so' in world affairs, as well as have capabilities of ensuring their own security and stability in their neighbourhood. A few of the interviewees gave statements that the EU were trying to increase their own influence, and that this was a motivation for member states. Mr. MacDowall, when asked why enlargement to Bulgaria was important for the Union, emphasized that not only does enlargement provide this opportunity to Western Europe, but also that it is more likely that these countries' influence will be greater if the CEECs are liberal democracies:

(..) I think, probably of parallel importance, is the strategic alliance with the Eastern European countries in terms of diplomacy, in terms of Europe being stronger with more

members (...) from the aspects of western European countries, I think there's an aspect that if they become liberal democracies, they are more likely to be open to us politically and diplomatically and strategically, than if they are dictatorships, particularly because those dictatorships are leaning heavily towards Russia and have been for 45 years

(MacDowall, 2013)

As will be examined further in the next chapter, the EU membership did influence Bulgaria's behaviour during the crisis in the former Yugoslavia, aligning them to Western European policy goals at great domestic expense for themselves, and membership was used in order to induce this behaviour in Bulgaria (MacDowall, 2013; Popova, 2013; Skarstein, 2013; Benisheva, 2013). Commenting further on the rationale for enlarging the EU, Mr. MacDowall emphasized the importance of influence in these countries, saying that while CEECs were under Soviet influence for many years, EU and NATO enlargement has now altered the map significantly: "Eastern European countries were under Russia's influence, but now they are considerably more under Berlin's influence, as indeed Washington's and London's" (MacDowall, 2013).

In the case of Bulgaria, this means that for the strategic interests of the Union, the EU may find more support for its policies and that Bulgaria aligns with the Union. In terms of energy security for example, this may result in the support for diversification projects such as Nabucco, which is in the Union's interests. In the long term, this influence and Bulgaria's alignment with the EU's policy agenda through the CFSP<sup>9</sup> and other forms of political cooperation, works to the Union's advantage, for example in energy security and internal security sectors. Dr. Passy, Mrs. Popova and Ambassador Benisheva all expressed the same notion, that Bulgaria, along with other CEECs, fully supported the NATO operations in Kosovo, the operations in Afghanistan, and even Iraq, as their support enhanced their membership bids in both NATO and the EU (Passy, 2013; Popova, 2013; Benisheva, 2013). This type of support, as will be discussed in the case of Kosovo in the next chapter, enhanced their bid to join the EU, because they lent these operations legitimacy and capabilities, making success for European foreign policy goals more likely.

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<sup>9</sup> CFSP refers to the 'Common Foreign and Security Policy'.

However, these arguments concern enlargement in general, and would be easier to discuss, and would also be a larger issue, when discussing the full Eastern enlargement. The same goes for the fact that there were extreme worries about how the enlargements would affect the political cooperation in the Union, according to Mr. Bull, and that widening means that deepening might be a lot more difficult, as Mr. MacDowall told me (MacDowall, 2013; Bull, 2013). Thus, it is difficult to discuss these issues when only studying one case, because the impact of the one case, compared to all of the CEECs, is marginal in power terms. However, there is some evidence that points in this direction in the case of Bulgaria. In addition, the evidence presented in the next chapter regarding Bulgaria's role in regional stability aspects, and their alignment with Western policies towards the regional instability in the Balkans, indicates that maintaining influence was crucial during the course of the accession process.

#### 4.7 Theoretical implications of the empirical observations regarding the decision to enlarge

The decision to enlarge to Bulgaria was, as the evidence has shown, was heavily influenced by security incentives, and the security dimensions of enlargement were evident. Extending the security community and injecting regional stability was key objectives for the EU, who saw it as being in its interest, and as a necessity in order to preserve a peaceful and stable external milieu. In this respect, the study finds support in this chapter for the utilitarian arguments behind democratic peace theory, and finds the presence of the components of many-sided relations as a promoter of inter-state peace, as well as the export of liberal democratic norms and values. Injecting stability through the extension of membership was also seen as a key goal of enlargement to Bulgaria, given their volatile neighbourhood.

In this respect, the study also finds support for the geopolitical approach and the rationalist hypothesis, as the EU's security interests were best preserved by enlargement, even at great risks. This regards both the extension of the security community, enlargement as a principal mean to inject stability in the Balkans, as well as containing Russian influence, fighting internal security threats, and the strategic aspect

of possibly reducing energy dependency through the establishment of diversifying energy infrastructure through Bulgaria.

Three key findings should be emphasized: First of all, democratic peace theory does not find support in all the themes brought up in this chapter, and is too one-dimensional in its approach to successfully capture the security dimension enlargement in this particular case. While it was vital to get Bulgaria away from Russian influence, as was expressed by several of the interviewees, democratization and membership is an important tool for aligning Bulgaria with the EU, and not necessarily an end in itself in this respect. The EU acted strategically to pursue their own interests in order to achieve peace, which is compatible with democratic peace theory, but also to counter other threats; Russian influence, internal security threats, and to some degree energy dependency, though this escalated as an issue later. Thus, democratization through membership was wielded as an effective instrument strategically, to pursue the Union's long-term interests.

The EU countered these threats with the extension of membership to Bulgaria, because this was the tool they had that was powerful enough. Another example is the energy security concerns, where democracy is not an end in itself, but rather a guarantee for stability, which was vital for establishing such high-cost infrastructure projects as gas-pipelines. This was highly accredited to Bulgaria's membership in the EU and NATO. Democratization therefore needs to be viewed as a tool for the EU in order to pursue interests, but security interests are more diverse than merely obtaining inter-state peace between members, and the enlargement tools are more diverse than merely democratization. It also involves exerting influence and ensuring policy position alignment, as well as ensuring control over geographical factors, such as possible corridors for diversifying energy infrastructure. As the next chapter will argue, the goal of reaching the set criteria collided with other security and geo-political concerns, and the EU's strategic behaviour indicates that they knowingly gave up their most powerful instruments during the process, because geopolitical and strategic concerns were seen as more important.

Secondly, there seems to be a logic in the security dimension that confirms the realist hypothesis: Most of the interviewees gave answers which reflect the motivation of the EU in security as being 'a fear of future developments'. This goes for all themes, even where risks had to be accepted such as exposure to internal security threats. The Union members were quite willing to accept costs, and in some cases increased security threats in the short term, at the time of the decision, because they feared the alternative. It was vital that Bulgaria aligned with the West in the long term, and did not fall under Russian influence, and the interviewees reflected that countering security threats may become more difficult if Bulgaria were left out, and the threats might become worse. It was believed at the time that including Bulgaria would be better than excluding in the long term, and that conditionality would help reduce the immediate costs if given time to work. The next chapter will argue that immediate and long-term geopolitical concerns and security risks were instrumental in changing the enlargement strategy towards Bulgaria, even if that meant giving up the effectiveness of their policy instruments, and endangering the reforms of democratization, rule of law and the results in the fight against organized crime and corruption.

The general criticism of realist hypotheses in explaining EU's policy towards Eastern Europe seems unfounded when considering at the empirical evidence in the case of Bulgaria. Karen Smith writes in her book that realism offers little explanatory power in terms of EU policy towards Eastern Europe, because balancing a 'common enemy' does not seem to apply well to Russia, because of the weakness of the federation at the time (Smith, 2004:13). However, the evidence in this case points in another direction. This rationale thus fits better with the geopolitical approach, rather than that of liberal democratic peace, even if containing Russian influence might contribute to greater chances of establishing democracy in the long run. However, the next chapter will argue, as it analyses the altering enlargement strategy, that the urgency of this concern along with other geopolitical factors was deemed serious enough that the EU even altered its strategy on this basis, endangering their most effective tool of democratization.

A third key finding is the notable absence of the normative argument of democratic peace in the recollection of the interviewees, unlike the utilitarian argument. Out of the

components, the interviewees gave answers that reflected the internalization of democratic values and norms, and the establishment of many-sided relations between countries, creating economic interdependence as a necessity for achieving peace. While the statements show the presence of this logic in the EU's decision to enlarge, the normative dimension offers less evidence. While almost all the interviewees agreed that democratization is actively pushed because the EU has interests in it, very few justified democratization efforts as a duty, moral exercise or *solely* on the basis that it is good in itself. Even if enlargement provides security for both parts, meaning the existing and newer member states, it was seldom sold as an argument solely for the purpose of creating security or democracy in itself for the benefit of the *acceding state*. Thus, enlargement was not justified on moral grounds solely for serving the acceding party, but rather for *both* parties. Not all interviewees put weight on the notion that membership promotes democratization. Some put less emphasis on the issue. Dr. Passy even went as far as saying that enlargement is not about democratization at all, peculiarly enough considering the accession criteria: "They [the EU] do not treat enlargement as an instrument of democratization" (Passy, 2013). While it might be that most of the interviewees see democracy as a good thing, they did not justify the enlargement on this basis to the same degree as they justified it with utility. Mr. MacDowall expressed his view that ideological factors played its part, and that it was an incentive for member states that democracy was good for Bulgaria:

I think that there's a liberal, almost imperialist view, that liberal democracy and free markets are the best way, and that these countries [Bulgaria and Romania] should benefit from them, and, that's a view I suppose I happen to share, that the countries are better off as liberalized economies and democracies than they were under totalitarian dictatorship and communist systems. So those are factors. And again, the feeling that they were part of the European family and should be brought back into the family.

(MacDowall, 2013)

While it is probable, and almost certain, that most of the interviewees happen to share this view of democracy, none of the others provided this type of normative concerns as primary concerns for member states. Mr. MacDowall acknowledged that the evidence

for the EU to be seen as a normative actor in the aspect of enlargement is ambiguous, and that a level of hypocrisy might be found in the member states' approach to democracy in their neighbourhood and worldwide:

So this is a part of the vision that the world everywhere would be better off as a liberal democracy, but it's also abundantly apparent that there is a great hypocrisy on this. The US, the UK and Europe, the European Union as a whole, and indeed most of its allies, with North America more broadly, Japan, Australia, are quite happy to prop up dictatorial regimes elsewhere in the world. So the liberal democratic movement speaks with a forked tongue when it comes to these governments' actions.

(MacDowall, 2013)

Only Ambassador Skarstein, out of the other informants, expressed normative concerns as playing a part in the decision to enlarge to Bulgaria, and cited their underdeveloped economy and low living standards as unacceptable for western democratic states:

You achieve peace and stability through economic integration. In addition, it is not acceptable to have a poor backyard. Europe is divided in two, not in east and west, but in poor Europe and rich Europe (...) The general idea is that you cannot have peace, stability and security in a divided Europe. Either geographical divisions or economic divisions. That is the general idea.

(Skarstein, 2013)

However, this argument does not escape the utility dimension either, as raising living standards and elevating the people out of poverty in Bulgaria is directly connected with the emergence of peaceful relations between states. While Western leaders and Western publics, may find poverty unacceptable and may seek to change this, it is widely seen as being in their interests. As Mr. MacDowall told me, when asked what the biggest security gain enlargement to Bulgaria would bring to the Union, he answered it was through the economic development that EU membership brings with it, that if social unrest in Bulgaria was unlikely before, it certainly is more unlikely now (MacDowall, 2013). In addition, according to Ambassador Skarstein, the economic development of Bulgaria pacifies the threat of immigration to some degree, as has

happened in other CEECs, where the threat of immigration was thought to be very high, but did not materialize to such an extent (Skarstein, 2013).

In this way, normative concerns seem to have played little part as motivation in it self, while norms, values and democratization was actively promoted as an *instrument* for the EU in order to pursue their own interest in peace. This does not mean that normative justifications and concerns do not exist, but more that interests are more central to explain the approach of the Union in the empirical evidence of this particular study. The Union did wish for both democracy and peace for their neighbouring countries and soon-to-be members, including Bulgaria, but it is evident that this does not escape the fact that peaceful relations between states gain the Union, and are in the Unions interests. This point will be discussed further in regards to the process, as the Union's strategy was altered for security concerns, even though such a move knowingly might undermine the democratic reforms in Bulgaria, and their strive towards establishing rule of law.



## 5 Explaining the shifts in the EU strategy

The reasoning behind the decision to enlarge has thus far shown that interests and the expected security gains seem to have been decisive for both theories' ability to explain the decision to enlarge to Bulgaria. Normative justification has not shown itself to be a central feature in the explanations of the interviewees in the same manner, though there have been a few exceptions. After investigating the security dimension in the initial decision in the previous chapter, which kind of behaviour can be detected in the Union's strategy and the process of Bulgaria's membership bid? What were the priorities for the Union in their strategy?

The geopolitical conditions, as it has been discussed, did not only affect the initial decisions of enlargement to Bulgaria, but also played heavily into the strategy, and even altered it, as it was changed based on the developments in the region during the last half of the 1990s and in the first few years into the new millennium. As this chapter will argue in its concluding remarks, it was even altered in spite of the risks of undermining the reform efforts of Bulgaria, risking the results of the democratization and integration process, causing an enlargement to a country with high-level corruption, severe organized crime and lacking standards in terms of rule of law. Two specific events are analysed; the 1999 reversal of the initial decision to keep Bulgaria out of the group of countries that opened negotiations in 1997 in spite of not fulfilling the criteria, and the EU's decision to set an accession date in 2002 (Varwick, 2000:157). In addition, post-accession conditionality will be discussed. The chapter will be concluded with a summarizing discussion of its findings and theoretical implications.

### 5.1 The decision of 1999 to open membership negotiations

While Bulgaria had signed the Association Agreement in 1993 and applied for membership in 1995, the Agenda 2000 did not open for accession negotiations, as all the criteria had not been met by 1997. Thus, the 'Luxembourg six' opened negotiations, leaving Bulgaria, Romania, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia behind, stating that negotiations would commence once they had made progress in satisfying the

Copenhagen Criteria (Smith, 2004:187, 193; Tatham, 2009:95, 113; Wallace, 2000:17). Thus, the original strategy of the Union was clear. Accession conditionality was meant to keep up pressure on the candidate countries which had not sufficiently progressed in terms of satisfying the criteria.

The strategy proved insufficient after the events of 1999 and the NATO-led military intervention in Kosovo, as fears grew over the nature of political development in the region. The need for adapting the strategy to the geopolitical environment was evident, and therefore the European Union changed course, and opened for negotiations with all countries that were deemed to have made sufficient progress in fulfilling the political criteria from Copenhagen (Tatham, 2009:91, 92).

This change of strategy, and the geopolitical causes of adapting a new approach is arguably one of the geopolitical impacts on enlargement that have the strongest empirical backing, and was equally reflected in the interviews. There were several reasons why this change of strategy was deemed necessary: First of all there was a distinct and urgent interest in projecting stability in the region, and an inherent risk of leaving the laggards behind (Tatham, 2009:94; Skålnes, 2005:224, 225; Smith, 2004:186; Higashino, 2004:360, 361). Neill Nugent writes that the change of enlargement strategy was a direct consequence of violence in the former Yugoslavia:

... the NATO campaign in Kosovo in early 1999 highlighted the continuous dangers in South-East Europe and the broader dangers inherent in letting the 'second wave' believe they were being left on the side.

(Nugent, 2004:36)

Ambassador Bull told me, when asked why the decision of opening negotiations and setting an accession date took place in spite of Bulgaria's lack of readiness, that the experience of recurring conflict in the former Yugoslavia required stabilizing efforts and that because of this "the political priorities outweighed the need for fulfilling the criteria" (Bull, 2013). The same notion was reflected from Ambassador Benisheva, who drew on both the instability in Kosovo as well as Chechnya, as a situation that required

accession for the countries that were taking steps in the right direction, such as Bulgaria:

In 1999 we had the Kosovo crisis, and the Chechnya crisis, and for political reasons, it was clear that the accession was a stabilizing factor for the geographical region. It was decided that all the countries that fulfilled political criteria would start negotiations. So the economic assessment was at that time considered less important, compared to the sharing of common values. So that explains the decision of 1999.

(Benisheva, 2013)

Though Ambassador Benisheva, as well as the Commission officials, justified opening negotiations due to the progress on the political criteria, there is cause for questioning this assessment of Bulgaria, especially in the area of rule of law. Indeed, several of the interviewees, and the Commission's own post-accession mechanism took issue with the assessment of Bulgaria fulfilling these parts of the criteria, at both the opening of negotiations and time of accession (The EU Commission, 2006; Skarstein, 2013; Bull, 2013). Indeed, there were such worries about their readiness that, on the eve of accession, one expert commented that no one knew how well Bulgaria had implemented their reforms, commenting that they were "EU-compliant on paper only" (Moravcsik, 2006).

In addition to the need for projecting stability in the region, the EU felt a need for rewarding Bulgaria for its handling of the crisis Kosovo and its display as a key diplomatic partner in their alignment to the Western foreign policy goals, even when it came at great domestic expense. Bulgaria suffered staggering economic losses through the boycott of the Milosevic regime, and the NATO bombings saw great opposition in the Bulgarian public (Pantev, 2008:102). The fact that Bulgaria was seen as willing to pay the price and align with the West was crucial for their eventual granting of both the opening of negotiations and the eventual setting of an accession date (Papadimitriou and Gateva, 2009:161; Haughton, 2007:238). As Karen Smith writes:

.. given the instability of their neighbourhood - and the support they had given to NATO action, simply made it infeasible not to include them in the next round of negotiation talks.

(Smith, 2011:311, 313).

Dr. Passy emphasized the Kosovo crisis as a major shifting point for Bulgaria's prospects for EU membership during our interview:

1999 was a key year, because then we supported the operation in Kosovo. This was a very important image-making for Bulgaria (...) Our participation in Kosovo, I would say, was even more important for our membership process in the EU than for NATO.

(Passy, 2013)

The same type of reasoning was reflected by the Foreign affairs advisor to the President of Bulgaria at the time, Mrs. Popova, highlighting that Bulgaria's support came at a high price domestically, and that this was recognized by the EU:

We were very supportive during the crisis, in spite of it not being in our interest, for economic reasons for example. The public opinion was not supportive of the NATO strikes and the intervention in Serbia (...) All the time we were a very reliable partner, and that enhanced our quest for membership.

(Popova, 2013)

Mr. MacDowall told me, when asked why the EU decided to open negotiations despite fulfilling the criteria, that it was all about rewarding their alignment to Western foreign policy, even if that meant going up against a culturally similar country, with which Bulgaria had good relations, as well as religious and historical bonds:

Bulgaria was seen as very willing to go against a country that they had a cultural allegiance [with], even though they have fought bitterly over the past century over Macedonia and the marches. Again, I think it [the EU] is trying not to reward bad behaviour.

(MacDowall, 2013)

The opening of negotiations thus seem to be justified of geopolitical grounds, and less on the fulfilment of the criteria, and the Union willingly took risks in its decision, because the geopolitical environment was unstable, and the developments called for awarding Bulgaria for the progress it had made, the support it had given, and reducing the risks of alienation.

## 5.2 Setting an accession date

The decision to open negotiations seems to have geopolitical reasons that outweighed the need for fulfilling the criteria at the time. In addition to the decision of opening negotiations in 1999, the EU faced a similar dilemma at the Copenhagen Council of 2002 when deciding on the setting of accession dates. While the pre-ins, as well as some of the initial laggards, had fulfilled the economic criteria, were making excellent progress in the negotiations, and were well underway of transposing the *acquis* into domestic legislation, Romania and Bulgaria were again lagging behind. The Union set the accession dates for the new members: Malta, Cyprus and the CEECs, except Bulgaria and Romania (Smith, 2004:186). Bulgaria and Romania had negotiated since 1999, but had not succeeded in completing them, and their lack of readiness left the two countries in the slow-lane, yet again. The Council therefore announced that:

... depending on further progress in complying with the membership criteria, the objective is to welcome Romania and Bulgaria as members of the European Union in 2007.

(Tatham, 2009:112).

This was a development few had foreseen, and is unusual because the EU had been extremely careful not to set clear accession dates, fearing that it would undermine the reform efforts of the countries. By setting a date, the Union may find it difficult turning down applicants, if the reforms have not been adequately carried out by the set date (Smith, 2004:193). However, the EU saw too many risks in leaving Bulgaria and Romania in the slow lane again. There were several reasons why the EU decided to set a date, in spite of the inherent risk of undermining the efficiency.

First of all, the need for rewarding their efforts, given their geopolitical environment, was evident. When asked why the EU would set an approximate accession date, despite the inherent risks of undermining reform efforts, Mr. MacDowall emphasized that not acknowledging their efforts would send the wrong message to an already unstable region:

I think that the Kosovo conflict, and the feeling that those countries [which] have embraced democracy and were liberalizing their economies should be rewarded for this, will have been a strong aspect of this. In 2002 you have only had a year or two since the revolution in Serbia. You're still in a state where Serbia is a fairly autocratic country, very much in a transition and very much behind other countries in Eastern Europe. You have Croatia recovering from war still. Albania five years after a situation that was very nearly a civil war, in Macedonia there were squirmishes that almost amounted to civil war in 2001. So with the western Balkans still troubled, congratulating or acknowledging the efforts of Romania and Bulgaria, which both had had extremely difficult but obviously conflict free transitions, was the right thing to do.

(MacDowall, 2013)

Ambassador Skarstein's recollection followed the same logic, telling me that it was important to send a strong message of hope to the countries that were in turmoil, that progress is possible, and EU membership achievable, when asked why the accession date was set before the end of negotiations. Thus, the EU was exerting a power of example:

I think that letting in Romania, and also Bulgaria, which had even greater challenges, would give hope to these countries. Because Bulgaria, when the Wall fell, was the country with the biggest challenges, after Albania. When they have done it, then it is possible for everyone to do it. So that is the logic behind it.

(Skarstein, 2013)

A second concern for the Union that ultimately resulted in the setting of a target accession date was the risk of alienating Bulgaria and Romania along the way. For a long time, the Union had been worried that if they exercised conditionality without giving carrots along the way, the applicant countries might fall under Russian influence, or

loose interest in acceding the Union (Smith, 2004:180). On the other hand, as Smith writes, the risk of the countries returning to Moscow's sphere should not be exaggerated because of the weakness of the Russian regime, even if Bulgaria was feared to be considering a counter-alliance with Russia at some point (Smith, 2004:180, 181). However, Ambassador Bull expressed that the EU was warned that the public opinion might be lost without progress in terms of membership, but also that there was a considerable risk that Bulgaria could return to the Russian sphere of influence:

The politicians of both Bulgaria and Romania warned all along that if they did not join quickly, the development might turn. That the population would say "we have had enough of this" (...) If they did not take them in now, the tide might turn, like you can see with Turkey now. There were worries that they might turn towards Russia.

(Bull, 2013)

There was a general feeling that it was risky to keep them in the candidate period forever, given the circumstances. Therefore it was important to set a target date, and there were hopes that the development would pick up once the candidate countries were in. Ambassador Skarstein reflected over the setting of the accession date:

The EU had set a date, January 2007, with the option of delaying until January 2008. What would happen in a year that would make postponement worth it? If not 2007, what would be better in 2008? So the EU hoped that if they joined, the reforms would pick up their pace. And one would not have to accept the cost of saying no yet again. It was a vital concern to keep them from Russian influence.

(Skarstein, 2013)

Thus, the setting of a date, as well as the opening of negotiations, seem to have been formed more by a reactive strategy based on geopolitical incentives, rather than the fulfilment of the criteria. The EU was fully aware that they risked the efficiency of conditionality, and that their actions might undermine reform efforts. The risk was deemed too great not to give Bulgaria clear promises of accession. And so Bulgaria, along with Romania, acceded the Union on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January, 2007. The strategy of the Union was altered, despite the risks that it undermined the instrument of conditionality, and 'entrapped' the EU, making it too costly for member states to say no if sufficient

progress was lacking at the time of the set accession date (Smith, 2004:193). By the same logic as with the opening of negotiations, a fixed accession date might undermine the democratization efforts, and slow them down, rather than keeping them up, resulting in a premature accession for the country without the fulfilment of the criteria. Nevertheless, the Union went as far as promising an accession date, hoping that additional efforts would be made in order to grant membership on the set date.

### 5.3 Post-accession conditionality in the case of Bulgaria

Even before the accession, it seemed evident that reforms had not gone as far as one had hoped in Bulgaria. While the establishment of institutions had been carried out, the *acquis* had been transposed, and the formal requirements fulfilled, there were clear indications that in the areas of judicial reform, rule of law, organized crime and corruption, results were lacking (Moravcsik, 2006). As one expert said of Bulgaria and Romania before their accession, they were suspected to be “EU-compliant on paper only”, and that “no one knows if they are really enforcing the rules” and the *acquis* (Moravcsik, 2006). This resulted in the unprecedented establishment of the *Cooperation and Verification Mechanism*, a Commission reporting mechanism for setting benchmarks and evaluating reforms in Bulgaria and Romania, within the areas that were deemed to be below par in terms of fulfilling the criteria (The EU Commission, 2006). The Commission decision that established the mechanism reads:

The Commission, whilst noting the considerable efforts to complete Bulgaria's preparations for membership, has identified remaining issues in its Report of 26 September 2006, in particular in the accountability and efficiency of the judicial system and law enforcement bodies, where further progress is still necessary to ensure their capacity to implement and apply the measures adopted to establish the internal market and the area of freedom, security and justice. (...)

Article 38 of the Act of Accession empowers the Commission to take appropriate measures in case of imminent risk of serious shortcomings in Bulgaria in the transposition, state of implementation, or application of acts adopted under Title VI of the EU Treaty and of acts adopted under Title IV of the EC Treaty. (...)



The remaining issues in the accountability and efficiency of the judicial system and law enforcement bodies warrant the establishment of a mechanism for cooperation and verification of the progress of Bulgaria to address specific benchmarks in the areas of judicial reform and the fight against corruption and organised crime. (...)

If Bulgaria should fail to address the benchmarks adequately, the Commission may apply safeguard measures based on articles 37 and 38 of the Act of Accession, including the suspension of Member States' obligation to recognise and execute, under the conditions laid down in Community law, Bulgarian judgments and judicial decisions, such as European arrest warrants.

(The EU Commission, 2006)

Thus, the Commission established a yearly reporting mechanism, where reforms and progress would be evaluated, and benchmarks for the next year set, with the possibility of suspending vital reciprocal rights. In addition, the EU can suspend structural funds under suspicion of abuse and corruption with the funds, which it did in 2008, following a series of abuse in infrastructure funds (Oxford Business Group, 2008). In 2012, after five years of operation for this CVM mechanism, it was renewed, on the grounds that Bulgaria had not yet fulfilled the criteria properly, that proper rule of law was still lacking, and further efforts were needed to achieve the standards of the European Union in terms of fighting organized crime and corruption (The EU Commission, 2012).

Bulgaria has also aspired to join the Schengen area, an integrated part of the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice, with an original target accession date set for 2011. However, their membership has been blocked on political grounds, despite their technical readiness. Commentators and politicians have been quick to tie the Schengen veto to the lacking progress under the CVM, and their premature accession in the EU in terms of readiness (EurActiv, 2011a). In this way, some of the interviewees with knowledge of the Schengen membership process for Bulgaria, claimed that the CVM-reports were critically assessed by the member states in regards to Bulgaria's bid for Schengen. One interviewee who wished to remain anonymous when discussing this issue, linked the Schengen veto with the lacking progress under the CVM reports, and told me:

Frankly speaking, I think that this is political leverage at the moment (...) It is political leverage, which has its reasons. The situation with organized crime, corruption. (...) Of course, it is politically important for Bulgaria to be in Schengen. They have their grounds to do this. Technically Bulgaria is ready, but politically they are not ready.

(Anonymous informant, 2013)

Ambassador Skarstein told me, when asked if she saw any connection between Schengen veto and the premature accession: "Definitely. Now they [the EU] are catching up what they did not manage to get done in the EU accession process, even if it is not said out loud" (Skarstein, 2013). Thus it seems that conditionality continues after accession, and though progress has been made, results in terms of fulfilling the criteria and the standards of the Union are still lacking (The EU Commission, 2012).

## 5.4 Theoretical implications of the empirical observations concerning the altering EU strategy

In summary, one can argue that the choices made by the EU member states during the course of the accession process was meant to be a balanced approach to the circumstances in which the Union found itself. Though the European Union is seldom described as a strategic actor, the accession process of Bulgaria and Romania might prove to be the exception. In the face of geopolitical concerns, and the strategic environment at the time, the Union tried to balance the 'carrot and stick' in their approach towards Bulgaria and Romania. In spite of the costs of giving up the instrument of conditionality, and the suspected risks of doing so, the Union's decisions to open negotiations and set an accession date, as well as letting the countries accede when they did, was justified by the fear of future developments, namely what could happen in the long run without accession. The reasoning behind the decisions were mainly the fear of increased Russian influence in the country and increased structural competition, the fear of losing public support in the countries if they were kept in the slow lane for too long, the need for rewarding Bulgaria for aligning with Western policy positions at great domestic expense, and to stabilize the volatile region. Thus, the EU

can be said to have been *reactive* in their approach to enlargement, and the security implications of enlargement brought about the changes in the Union's strategy.

What are the theoretical implications of these findings? First of all, it underlines the finding from the previous chapter that the promotion of democracy is a tool, and is useful for the EU member states, but is too one-sided as a security-policy for the EU, as security for the EU is a multi-dimensional issue. Ensuring alignment and influence seem to have greater clout when dealing with the decisions in regards to the *process*, even if democratic regimes are more susceptible to Western European influence. Thus, democracy and civilizing efforts are tools for the Union, but they are not the only ones the EU relies on in the face of threats. Secondly, democracy-promotion as a tool for conflict-prevention is actively utilized, but is only an instrument, and not an end in itself. If the EU's first priority was to establish rule of law in Bulgaria, justified on a normative basis because it is beneficial to Bulgarians, why did the member states inhibit their own ability to exercise conditionality, their most powerful 'hard-power' tool? It would seem strange, if achieving satisfactory results in terms of establishing a transparent and uncorrupted judiciary, proper rule of law and fighting organized crime and high-level corruption was the key objective, one would give up their own 'civilizing' tool.

Normative concerns as projected by the democratic peace theory, such as promoting democracy, rule of law and liberal democratic values, because it is 'good' and 'right', was not the primary priority for the Union in the process of enlargement to Bulgaria. The primary priority was ensuring that Russian influence was contained, public support for EU membership upheld, the long-term stability of the region ensured, and making sure Bulgaria aligned itself with the Union and stayed on course for membership, and rewarding them for this. These concerns were primary in the process as it unfolded, the quality of the rule of law and transposition of the *acquis* was demoted to 'second-order' concerns, when primary concerns of security and stability were threatened. This does not mean that normative concerns did not matter for the Union. It did, and according to the empirical findings, the EU has a direct interest in promoting these issues, specifically because the EU has an internal security interest in handling them. It was just thought less important than concerns of regional stability, security and long-term strategic

objectives at the time. Thus, the altering of strategy from the Union seems justified from a long-term interest and security point of view, something that is compatible with the realist hypothesis. Democratic peace does not explain the EU's conduct in the process, because the normative concerns were second-order concerns, and the security threats and their response is not justified from a conflict prevention standpoint alone.

However, it might be argued that Bulgaria would indeed be worse off if public support for membership dropped and alienated Bulgaria from wanting membership, if it fell under Russian influence, or indeed regional instability spread and jeopardized Bulgaria's territory and population. In terms of succeeding with reforms, there was a certain level of pragmatism about what could be achieved, rather than what should be achieved. One Commission official's statement about the readiness of these countries shortly before accession; "Romania may not look like Sweden yet, but they look a lot less like Azerbaijan", seem to capture the essence of this argument, which is just as applicable to Bulgaria (Moravcsik, 2006). If the goal of the EU was primarily civilizing Bulgaria for Bulgaria's democratic, economic and security-political benefit, it would be a lot more achievable if the EU avoided risking the alienation of the public and government, avoided regional instability and contained Russian influence, even if the EU had to be pragmatic during the course of the process.

This is a valid point, and some of the evidence supports this line of reasoning. While it is true that such an idealist argument might have reigned as well, the response was justified primarily on strategic grounds, and based itself primarily on the situation in Kosovo, and geopolitical reasoning. Thus, by injecting pragmatism into a decision, it rejects idealism, and the EU had to be realistic about what could be achieved, and would be achieved, while still prioritizing its own security. This still follows a strategic logic of *realpolitik*, that resonates better with realist theory than idealist approaches, because idealist theory would project that the EU achieves what is the desirable result, while realist theory projects that one would achieve the best possible results, given the circumstances in which the member states found themselves. There is a sharp distinction. The empirical evidence of pragmatic behaviour of the EU during the course of the process thus fits better with realist theory, best put in the words of Hans Morgenthau:

Political realism does not require, nor does it condone, indifference to political ideals and moral principles, but it requires a sharp distinction between the desirable and the possible – between what is desirable everywhere and at all times and what is possible under the concrete circumstances of time and place.

(Hyde-Price, 2008:31)

An interesting aspect of the premature enlargement to Bulgaria, is why there was agreement to enlarge, in spite of the costs that came with it. While this particular study, for reasons of scope and reach, treats the EU as a macro-entity under both theories, one can presume that countries such as Ireland, or Portugal or Luxembourg have less interest in enlargement than other larger countries from a security-political point of view. If letting in Bulgaria prematurely, meaning in essence that it was free-riding as it had not accomplished what others had, and has not achieved the same standards, was reasoned from a power-structural and geo-political point of view, why did these smaller nations agree if they had veto-powers? Why did they keep their promises, and accept costs, seeing as they are not neither geographically close, nor take measure of themselves to be powerful players who have an interest in shaping their external milieu, in contrast to Germany, France or Britain? Mr. MacDowall explained that agreement in order to achieve to these long-term strategic benefits for Europe was caused both by countries' interests in legitimacy, as well as bargaining powers:

I think you have those aspects, again, of what are the benefits, and if the costs outweighed the benefits. As far as every country was concerned, even if there were countries that were sceptical about Romania and Bulgaria, the cost of becoming a diplomatic piranha at Union level and thereby blocking their membership, was too much to pay (...) Even countries that saw very little to gain, or even thought they would lose out to Bulgaria joining, I'm not sure there were any countries like that in terms of government or governmental level, even they weren't going to veto it because they saw they costs of annoying those powerful countries which were in favour

(MacDowall, 2013)

Thus, power matters in the negotiation of the decision and execution of strategy, and countries had an interest in maintaining their own legitimacy. Ambassador Skarstein

reflected the same. She emphasized that breaking promises is a cost in itself for member states (Skarstein, 2013). Therefore, countries do not keep promises, nor accept costs in this case because it is good or right, such as constructivists project, but rather because they have an interest in it. Thus, the cohesion of EU member states in their decision and strategy fits with realist assumptions of decision-making, meaning that the EU is a vehicle for member state interests, that power matters in bargaining, that the EU seeks to shape its external environment, driven by the most powerful member states, and indicates that promises and legitimacy is directly connected with interests and power. Thus, while these notions require further investigation, the evidence of this study seem to reject 'rhetorical entrapment' arguments which are normatively justified, and implicates that the basic arguments of constructivist enlargement research has limitations in the case of Bulgaria.

After assessing both the empirical evidence of the security dimension of enlargement in the decision to enlarge to Bulgaria and the altering EU strategy, the study will conclude its findings in the next chapter.

## 6 Conclusion, limitations and the prospects of future research

After investigating the collected evidence through the last two chapters, this concluding chapter will first briefly summarize and discuss the main findings of this study, before providing an answer to the research question, and compare the hypotheses of the study with the findings from the empirical analysis. Thereafter, limitations to the study will be discussed briefly, and the outlook for further research and the impact on the future research on EU security and enlargement will be assessed.

### 6.1 Findings and conclusions

The review and analysis of the empirical evidence through the last chapters have shown that the security dimension in the European Union enlargement to Bulgaria was a present, evident and influential part of the Union's enlargement policy. On the whole, most of the interviewees sighted security as the most important reason for enlarging to Bulgaria in the first place, trumping economic and ideological reasons. The general finding of this study is that security does matter in enlargement policy in the case of Bulgaria, and that it not only influenced and motivated the decision to enlarge, but heavily influenced the EU's strategy towards Bulgaria's accession.

The first and primary conclusion is that the realist hypothesis is *confirmed*. The EU acted strategically in its decision and strategy towards the enlargement to Bulgaria, prioritizing its own long-term security and strategic interests. This was found to be the case in containing Russian influence, where the argument is strong, as well as in the EU's direct interests in stabilizing the Balkans. Bulgaria was seen as a key piece of the puzzle in their approach, and the EU utilized the enlargement in order to exercise a power of example, and utilized its influence in order to bring about the outcomes that were desired by the Union. These two considerations were crucial factors that both contributed to why and how the EU chose to enlarge to Bulgaria. In addition, the long term interests in energy security, which are closely connected to limiting Russian influence in the region, as well as prioritizing the fight against trans-national organized

crime and immigration, as well as boosting its own power, influence, reach and weight, were evident motivations. These were key interests for the Union, and they also played into the decision to enlarge. In this way, the EU boosted its own security, and utilized enlargement in its pursuit of interests, prioritizing these long-term considerations as the *primary* concerns, and even accepting costs in doing so.

Secondly, the hypothesis of democratic peace and extending the security community can be *partially confirmed*. The security-political intention of enlargement was in many ways evident, enlargement was meant to be the primary mechanism through which the EU exports liberal democratic values and establishes many-sided economic relations to Bulgaria, with the expectation of making conflict far less likely. The continuation of the peace project was supported by many of the interviewees, and the expected *utility* that the EU expected from it was clearly security-political. Thus, this particular logic coexist with the logic of *realpolitik*, both based on securing EU interests, its population and industries. While democratic peace and security community logics are one-dimensional, the approach of the Union was far more diverse than merely avoiding conflict. Its take on security in enlargement was multi-dimensional. Thus, the instrument of democratization and inclusion in the community of shared values should be considered a tool for the member states' utility, comparable to rationalist behaviour under realism, and not a normative end in itself.

This is the reason for the partial confirmation of the hypothesis. The normative justification of democratic peace did not come through as strongly in the evidence, unlike the rationalist or utilitarian justification. This does not mean that they did not matter, but rather that they were treated as 'second-order concerns'. Through the decision-making process and strategy, the EU consistently prioritized long-term interests in security and stability, and knowingly undermined their own powerful tool for bringing benefits to Bulgarians in both security and other areas. The lack of readiness of Bulgaria displays the shortcomings in rule of law, corruption and organized crime, which are serious societal security threats for Bulgarians, and indeed for the EU. Instead of employing their most effective tool to keep pressure on the candidate country, the EU prioritized their own long-term interests, balancing the costs and potential for worse costs in potential non-enlargement situations. The result of



premature enlargement was by and large caused by the EU's fear of future developments in a non-enlargement scenario, even at the cost of risking reform efforts. Thus normative concerns were demoted to 'second-order concerns'. The unfolding process and the clear priorities of the EU thus confirms a strategic pursuit of interests more compatible with realist theory, and the case for normative justification is weak in the empirical evidence. As the Union's efforts to implement post-accession conditionality has shown, the Union members are still concerned about these issues, and try to decrease costs and promote normative concerns after accession, exactly because the very same concerns had to give way for geopolitical and security-political interests in the pre-membership conditionality period.

The study confirms that security is much more than the absence of war, and the empirical findings indicate that security in enlargement was to a large extent fraught with uncertainty, and the Union's policy to achieve security was more than a mere idealist pursuit in search of enlarging a free and prosperous security community. In the case of Bulgaria, there were clear workings of *realpolitik*, and the policy can be seen as a reactive response to external events that shifted the EU's preferences along the way, even forcing the Union to take risks, undermine its own power, and expose itself to threats.

## 6.2 Impact on the current research agenda of EU security and enlargement

While this study has not been aimed at explaining why enlargement takes place *per se*, the findings of this case study of Bulgaria have implications on the theoretical debate of enlargement, as well as future studies of EU as a security actor. The findings of the study implicate that security concerns was a decisive factor for why enlargement to Bulgaria took place, and in this specific case, also contributes to explaining *how* it took place. Thus, by virtue of empirical evidence, this thesis aligns itself with some of the arguments of other rationalist scholars of security in enlargement, among others Skålnes (2005), as well as Vachudova (2005) and Zielonka (2006). The almost conclusive confirmation of the two hypotheses shows two distinct security logics at

work in enlargement, but also sheds light on the research agenda in terms of how promises, norms and values matter. The results of this study have implications on the future theoretical debates of EU enlargement. Constructivist hypotheses of 'rhetorical entrapment' do not fit with the findings of this study, as keeping promises and legitimacy must be seen in the light of costs and benefits, according to the statements of several of the interviewees. Promises were kept because it bears a cost not to comply with them, not because keeping them is morally right as Helene Sjursen argues (Sjursen, 2002:508).

In addition, the case for normative security considerations is poor in the study of Bulgaria, where the EU member states at several occasions, even at short-term costs to themselves, prioritized long-term interests and security concerns, rather than the increased welfare and security of Bulgaria's citizens through the continued conditionality to fight organized crime and establish rule of law. Thus, the study implicates that normative concerns may well exist, but is nevertheless 'second order' concerns. Rationalist and utilitarian decision-making models thus fit better with the findings of the study, and implicate that a security dimension should indeed be considered a key factor when investigating enlargement of the EU.

This study has not invalidated the arguments of constructivists, which say that enlargement is, security-politically speaking, risky, like Helene Sjursen argues (Sjursen, 2002:498, 499). In fact, the nature of security in enlargement to Bulgaria has shown that it is fraught with risk, and as Ambassador Bull told me, could at worst threaten the political union of EU (Bull, 2013). So Helene Sjursen asks, why did they do it anyway? This study has shown that while costs were accepted, the motivation was a fear of future developments, and a distinct fear that the EU would be worse of in a non-enlargement scenario. In other words, the findings of the study in the case of Bulgaria, reflects Mattli's argument, which says that the net cost of excluding countries was bigger than the net cost of accepting them (Vachudová, 2005:245), from a security-political point of view. The fear of the non-enlargement scenario, as reflected by Tony Blair, sums up these fears: "Without enlargement western Europe will always be faced with the threat of instability, conflict and mass migration on its borders" (BBC News Online, 2000). This argument in the case of Bulgaria might provide new insights into

why costs were accepted in the Eastern enlargement as a whole, as most of the security-political arguments that supports this statement could be applied to the CEECs in general.

Secondly, the study's findings tells a story of the EU as a security actor that is seldom told, as well as depicting it through a theoretical scope that is rarely applied to studies of the EU. Primarily, this study shows that the EU may be described as a strategic actor in this particular case, and that its reactive behaviour and considerations of long-term strategic goals calls for new theoretical research into the nature of EU's political cooperation, especially in the area of enlargement, where the EU has *power*. While studies of other areas of policy-cooperation in the Community have provided bleak and pessimistic notions of EU capabilities of unity and willingness to work towards a common goal in the realm of external affairs and security, such as the very slow development of the Common Foreign and Security Policy, this study provides a very different description.

Realist models and geopolitics, as mentioned earlier, is almost never applied to the EU, and is commonly believed to have little explanatory power in explaining 'normative power Europe'. In this project, the results tell a different tale, and realism and geopolitical considerations do explain a great deal about why and how the EU went through with enlargement to Bulgaria, and even functioning beside the logics of democratic peace. Thus, it would be interesting if these findings could provide a renewed interest in applying realist and geopolitical frameworks to the study of both enlargement and the EU policy cooperation as a whole, as well as explore its relationship to democratic peace research more in depth.

On a final note, security and strategic concerns should not be viewed as the only explanatory factor in enlargement, and this study has tried hard not to portray it as such. Indeed, the interviewees also emphasized other explanatory factors, such as an economic rationale behind it in spite of the short-term costs (MacDowall, 2013; Skarstein, 2013; Passy, 2013; Bull, 2013). Other factors that have not been included here might also affect the decisions of the Union in coming enlargements, such as the absence of threats, domestic opposition in the existing member countries or the Union's

capacity to absorb. Specific factors may affect specific situations, such as the coming enlargement to Croatia, or the stalling bid of Turkey. If security and strategic concerns were the only concern for the EU, enlargement policies would look a lot different, e.g. Turkey would almost definitely already be a member (İçener et al., 2010). In the case investigated, the security situation at the time must be taken into account for the interpretation of evidence, as the fear of future developments was decisive throughout the process for both explanatory theories. Therefore the findings of the study must be interpreted in its historical context, even if they can provide useful insights for future research.

### 6.3 Limitations

While this project has tried to keep the research design as robust as possible, the project does have certain limitations that should be kept in mind when interpreting the results. First of all, the study has reproduced general trends in the interviews, and it should be noted that few of the views on the general themes were shared by all of the interviewees. However, I have weighed the evidence according to a few guidelines: The closer the interviewee was to the decision and process, the more weight I put on their statements. The same goes for objectiveness: The more objective the person, the more trustworthy the statement. In some cases, the interviewees might have prestige vested in the enlargement process and its outcome, and would seem more uncritical to certain facts. For example, when discussing premature enlargement to Bulgaria, few of the Bulgarian interviewees thought that it was premature, while all of the non-Bulgarians did. Thus, for the people who were political appointees and politicians, the evidence must be viewed in this light.

Secondly, as previously noted, the external validity of the study is weak, as the case study is poorly equipped to yield inferences over a population of cases. While this very specific case study of Bulgaria may not generalize its findings over all the CEECs in terms of explaining and understanding the security dimension, it may indeed prove to have yielded inferences that may be utilized for future research on enlargement and EU security. A third limitation for the study is the fact that I was not able to find a willing interviewee from the EU, something that affects the internal validity of the study. Better

and stronger inferences might have been drawn from the study, if an interviewee from the EU side, or from the member state side could have been included. Unfortunately, this was not possible, and the study's ability to withdraw inferences may have been compromised on this basis. A fourth and final limitation to the study is the treatment of EU as a somewhat unitary actor under both theories, though the theories differ on how the EU acts, and their core theoretical assumptions. Many studies underline the fact that the EU is not a unitary actor, and that this is a challenge for the study. However, while it would be useful to have more solid evidence of each member state's preferences and security concerns, the strict limits in time and length of the study made this too difficult to achieve. For future research, it would be interesting to enhance the understanding of the security dimension of enlargement from a member state perspective.

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