



The EU Eastern enlargement: Policy choices of the Spanish government
Sonia Piedrafita Tremosa
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Abstract
Eastern enlargement is a process in which the very identity of the European Union is under construction, with its constitutive principles and values being challenged. Policy choices of the member governments participating in this process can not exclusively being explained by rational choice assumptions, but a sociological approach to the issue also becomes necessary. Through the analysis of the Spanish government's policy on enlargement, this paper aims to show how policy preferences might not only respond to a cost-benefit calculus and how policy contents might develop endogenously during the process of policy formation in the EU. In this process there is room for member states to pursue their goals and search a collective decision that better accommodates their self-interest. However, deliberation also matters, and governments have to justify their actions in terms considered legitimate by all according to the constitutive principles and values of the EU polity.
Kurzfassung
Die Osterweiterung ist ein Prozess, in dem gerade die Identität der Europäischen Union im Aufbau begriffen, während ihre konstituierenden Prinzipien und Werte selbst umstritten sind. Die Auswahl von Politikoptionen durch die am Prozess beteiligten Mitgliedsregierungen können nicht ausschließlich durch Rational-Choice-Annahmen erklärt werden, sondern es ist auch ein soziologischer Ansatz zu diesem Thema notwendig. Durch die Analyse der spanischen Regierungspolitik zur Erweiterung versucht dieses Paper aufzuzeigen, wie Politikpräferenzen nicht nur auf einer Kosten-Nutzen-Rechnung basieren und wie sich politische Inhalte während des Prozesses der Politikentwicklung in der EU endogen entwickeln können. In diesem Prozess besteht für die Mitgliedsstaaten Spielraum, ihre Ziele zu verfolgen und nach einer gemeinsamen Entscheidung zu suchen, die ihren Eigeninteressen entgegen kommt. Dennoch spielt auch Verhandlung eine Rolle und Regierungen müssen ihre Aktivitäten in einer von allen als legitim erachteter Weise gemäß den konstituierenden Prinzipien und Werten der EU-Politik rechtfertigen.
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Contents:

- [Introduction](#)
- [1. Different modes or logics of social action: consequentiality, appropriateness and justification](#)
- [2. The anticipation of the consequences](#)
- [3. Policy contents, exchanges and concessions](#)
 - [3.1. The development of the Association policy](#)
 - [3.2. The working out of the pre-accession strategy](#)
 - [3.3. On the stipulation of the accession terms](#)
- [4. Appropriateness and justification](#)
 - [4.1. The conception of self in a social role and the force of moral arguments](#)
 - [4.2. Policy-making as an endogenous continuous process](#)
- [5. Concluding remarks](#)
- [References](#)

1

Introduction [↑]

Why Spanish governments did not veto EU's Eastern enlargement in spite of the foreseeable negative impact that this would have on Spain remains an open and controversial question. Successive Spanish governments did constantly strive to reduce or contain any anticipated negative effects and their support to the process has been conditioned by many *ifs* and *buts*. Since the early 1990s Spanish representatives have emphasised the negative consequences that Eastward enlargement might have on the integration process, the common policies, the institutions and the EC budget. Moreover, its support for the process has not been unconditional, in the sense that it has not been just a 'yes', but rather a 'yes...but', with certain demands both on the EU enlargement policy and on other linked issues. Despite all this, successive governments never threatened to veto the accessions and have kept on professing their solidarity with Central and Eastern European Countries (CEECs) and confirming the moral duty to assist these countries in their process of socio-economic and political transformation, regarding membership as the best means of achieving this goal and thereby overcoming the division of the continent.

Since the European Council ultimately decides by unanimity whether and when to ask for the Commission's opinion on an applicant, whether to give this the status of 'candidate', when to start the accession negotiations, and whether to accept their final terms, in principle each member state has the power to block any of these crucial stages of the decisional process. Accordingly, Spain could have vetoed the process whenever it considered its interests negatively affected, but it did not. This raises the question: why did Spain support Eastern enlargement to the (apparent) detriment of

its own interests?

2

According to a rational choice approach, the Spanish government would not have used this veto power, in spite of expected negative consequences, insofar as the (political) cost of opposing Eastern Enlargement could be even higher. Other powerful member states were in favour, leaving Spain with no chance of blocking the process without discrediting itself and/or weakening its position in negotiations on other issues. Undoubtedly, this would have also been against interest-maximising premises. Under these circumstances, when it was difficult if not impossible for Spain to oppose enlargement outright, the best remaining option was to support enlargement and in the course of the accession process do its best to protect its interests and get some concessions, using value- and norm-based arguments strategically to ‘make a virtue out of the necessity’.

However, history provides us with some instances in which member states, when their national interests have been at stake, either have used this veto power or have threatened to use it as a negotiating tool, blocking some stage or other of an enlargement process. It is the case of De Gaulle’s veto to the British application for accession to the EC in 1963, or France’s and Great Britain’s block of Spanish accession negotiations in the early 1980’s, or Spain’s threat to veto the conclusion of negotiations with Norway in 1994. More recently, some member governments have shown themselves to be rather reluctant to open accession negotiations with Turkey and seeking to avoid giving any guarantees that they will necessarily end up in full membership. Therefore, the question arises why the Spanish government declined to take a similar stance on the occasion of Eastern enlargement. Although interest-maximising premises could explain some Spanish demands during the process, a further explanation might be needed to better understand the fact that the Spanish government never threatened to veto Eastern enlargement in order to achieve its goals or get better outcomes.

A significant difference between *rationalist* and *sociological* approaches is the emphasis either puts on different *logics* or “modes of social action and interaction that are characterized by different rationalities as far as the goals of action are concerned” (Risse, 2000: 3). The next section of this paper will try to develop an analytical framework to analyse which logic better explains this political action: 1) the consideration of a set of national preferences and the anticipation of the consequences of the action, which has been referred to as a ‘logic of consequentiality’ (Elster, 1984); 2) the conception of self in a social role, or a ‘logic of appropriateness’ (March&Olsen, 1998); 3) the assessment of morally valid arguments, or a ‘logic of justification’ (Eriksen, 1999). In section 2, the predictable consequences of EU Eastern enlargement for Spain will be analysed. Section 3 will review Spanish Eastern enlargement policy in the 1990’s and examine to what extent it corresponds to an instrumental rationality; while in the subsequent section the same question will be approached from a sociological perspective.

1. Different modes or logics of social action: consequentiality, appropriateness and justification [↑]

Under the premises of rationalist theories in International Relations (IR), such as *liberalism* (Moravcsik, 1997) and *neo-realism* (Baldwin, 1993), interstate interaction responds to a *logic of consequentiality* (Elster, 1984; March&Olsen, 1989; Eriksen, 1999). In reaching international agreements, states are considered to be rational actors who define their preferences about certain issues in relation to their own material interests and act according to them in a basically ‘technical environment’ (Scott, 1991) where bargaining is the common procedure to resolve disputes (Elster, 1992; Schimmelfennig, 2003).

Therefore, the outcome depends on the distribution of power and on the individual preferences, which, although a priori defined, may change because of coercion, compensations, or persuasion. *Rational institutionalism* applies these assumptions to interaction within an organization, on the account that the institutional settings might set limits to the strategic behaviour of the members. Still, state governments are considered to build their respective positions as a result of the analysis of the expected consequences of the political actions, although with the consideration of these institutional constraints, acting thenceforward in a strategic way in order to maximise their gains. Efficiency in terms of the satisfaction of the members' interests lends legitimacy to a collective policy. Negotiation demands and salient concerns have to do with pragmatic issues such as the efficient attainment of economic or geopolitical objectives.

For constructivists, social action in international relations might also respond to a *logic of appropriateness*, that is the consideration by the actors on defining their preferences of what they are expected to do, i.e. the roles and norms to be applied (March & Olsen, 1989). Applied to institutional environments, *historical institutionalism* highlights the role of previous institutional commitments on defining state preferences and determining future policies – path dependence – (Pierson, 1995), whereas *sociological institutionalism* stresses the constitutive effect of norms and principles, which are internalised by the members of the organization so that preferences are defined and decisions are taken according to them (Parsons, 2000; Johnston, 2001). The criteria for justification of social action rely on values stemming from a particular cultural context, distinctive of that institution (Fossum, 2000) and salient concerns of the decision-making process have to do with the search for collective self-understanding and the building of a common identity, which can serve as the basis for developing stable goals and visions.

Rational choice approaches usually consider national preferences as given and in any case exogenous to the interaction process. Constructivists note the influence of structural factors on the actors' preferences and actions, but they tend to overlook the possibility that they might vary during, and as result of, the process of interaction. A more recent sociological approach, based upon the theory of the *communicative action* (Heath, 2001; Habermas, 1996), the "power of language" and the effects of "speech acts" (Kratochwil, 1989), maintains that preferences and policies might be endogenous to interaction; they can not be taken as given, but built in the discursive settings of the institution, where arguing –rather than bargaining- is the characteristic mode of communication (Elster, 1992). Actors are considered rational not only when they act according to their interests but also when they comply with norms and principles by all accepted, so that they have to justify their actions with arguments considered legitimate by the rest (Habermas, 1993). This mode of social action has been called *logic of justification*. In this process of communicative interaction, actors appeal to the force of a norm or a principle, and a 'rational consensus' is reached round the 'better argument' on what is the right thing to do according to universally valid standards. Actors do change preferences and model their behaviour through communicative interaction (Eriksen, 2000) and "co-ordinate their plans through argumentation, aimed at reaching mutual agreement." (Eriksen and Weigård, 1997: 221). The consensus of such a process could be a 'working agreement' (Eriksen, 2003: 34). In this case, the arguments given "do not have to be valid by universally accepted standards. Nor do they have to be the result of a deeply felt conviction on part of the author. But they have to be able to mobilize support" (Sjursen, 2002: 496). Arguments are clarified and reasons are challenged in the process, reaching a higher degree of understanding and making agreement possible. However, it might not lead to a shift in opinions and beliefs and actors might accept them for different reasons.

Table 1

All these concepts are very important to approach the puzzle of why Spain supported Eastern enlargement to the detriment of its own interests. Was the decision based on a cost-benefits calculus; that is a matter of 'efficiency' (instrumental rationality)? Was it a solidarity action determined by Spain's belonging to the European Community; that is a matter of 'identity' (contextual rationality)? Was it the result of the assessment of morally-valid arguments and the need to justify its actions with legitimate arguments (communicative rationality)?

2. The anticipation of the consequences [↑]

According to the assumptions of instrumental rationality such as it is considered in liberal intergovernmentalism theory (Moravcsik, 1997), domestic political systems generate a set of stable, weighted objectives concerning particular 'states of the world' (future substantive outcomes that might result from international interaction), which the governments pursue with the maximum efficiency afforded by available political means (Moravcsik, 1998: 23). This ordered and weighted set of objectives constitutes state preferences, reflecting the objectives of those domestic groups which influence the state apparatus, are formed prior to inter-state political interaction, and thus determine any significant foreign policy action (dependent variable). State officials define these state preferences on the basis of domestic societal interests and act purposively in world politics. Each state seeks to realize its distinctive preferences under varying constraints imposed by the preferences of the other states and the asymmetrical distribution of power and information among them. Preferences might be grounded in ideas and values, but economic interests remain primary. International actors are considered rational when they interact to pursue their respective material and ideal welfare.

This brings us to the key question of what could be the anticipated consequences of Eastern Enlargement for Spain. Clearly Spain is unlikely to benefit from Eastern enlargement as much as other member states (MSs), while at the same time the process may negatively affect its geopolitical and economic interests. Arguments in favour of enlargement based on proximity, interdependence, security and stability, hardly correspond to Spanish interests, given that Spain is much more affected in geopolitical terms by events in the Mediterranean area and is economically much better connected with other parts of the world, in particular Latin America. In 1998, with the liberalisation process in the CEECs already quite advanced, the exports to the CEECs only represented the 2% of total Spanish exports and the 7.4% of the Spanish exports out of the EU. Moreover, these sales only supposed the 2.4% of total CEECs imports, with Spain being one of their least relevant trading partner in the EU (Viguera, 2001; López Moreno, 1999). Likewise, Spanish direct investments in the area are also very low and neither have they increased since the liberalisation of East European markets.⁽¹⁾

The process could also have far-reaching, negative implications for Spain. Due to the CEECs' socio-economic structure, their accession might constitute a threat for Spanish interests in commercial and budgetary terms. As far as trade is concerned, agricultural and material- (iron and steel) and labour-intensive (footwear and textiles) goods are quite relevant in the production and export composition of both Spain and the CEECs. With regards to capital-intensive goods, both enjoy comparative advantages in those of lower range. In addition to this, Eastern countries' labour force is cheaper and transportation costs will be lower because of their proximity to the main markets of Spanish exporters. With regard to agriculture, competition might become even harder because Spain will have to compete with the CEECs for the allocation of the production quotas and CAP compensations and will have to suffer the reduction of protective tariffs required by the WTO each time the EU admits a new member.

As regards the budgetary competition and in order to assess the importance of EU funds for Spanish economy, it is worth noting that in 1999 Spain had become the first net recipient of structural funds, and the fourth as far as the agriculture funds were concerned, with a positive financial balance of six billion €. Taking into account the regional prosperity of the CEECs and the situation of their agriculture holdings and prices, together with the 1999 Berlin Council decision to steadily reduce EU expenditure from 2003 on, it would be reasonable to assume that next accessions will take place at the expense of the funds that the net recipients among the old MSs have so far been receiving. Incidentally, we must not forget that not only public EU funds but also private direct investment from non-EU countries may be re-directed from Spain to the emergent CEECs' economies.

In anticipation of such consequences, it is at first sight puzzling why the Spanish government never voiced any opposition to Eastern enlargement but instead agreed to the process at the 1993 Copenhagen Council – without previously having assured a more favourable allocation of the costs. According to rationalist approaches, not only are state preferences important, but their intensity also matters. The relative power of states is defined in terms of 'asymmetrical interdependence', which dictates the relative value of agreement to different governments, that is to say the intensity of their preferences. When governments have varying preference intensities across different issues, it may be to the advantage of parties to exchange concessions (Moravcsik, 1998: 65). Spain might have no particular gain from Eastern enlargement, but provided that other MSs did, cooperation was in the interest of all. In exchange of concessions in this issue, the Spanish government could have pursued other objectives, avoiding discredit and losing support in other negotiations. In the next section, we will examine to what extent this may be valid.

3. Policy contents, exchanges and concessions [↑]

3.1. The development of the Association policy

After the fall of the Berlin Wall, Spanish Prime Minister Felipe González (1982-1993) seemed perhaps more interested in subsequent events than might be expected from a Prime Minister of a medium-sized power on the Western edge of Europe. On the eve of the Council of Ministers of Paris in November 1989 he played an important role in getting the Twelve to reach a common position of support for the changes in the socialist bloc.⁽²⁾ Right after this meeting he expressed a desire to advance EC institutional reform (which was a priority for the Spanish government, who considered its weight in the Council was not in accordance with Spain's population size) in order to facilitate a closer relation with the Eastern countries.⁽³⁾ However, he insisted on the need to consider the consequences that any EC policy towards the CEECs could have upon the Spanish internal development and some important dimensions of Spanish foreign policy. Therefore, Spain had to "act positively in favour of these changes and defend at the same time its internal and external interests".⁽⁴⁾

When time came for discussing the European Agreements, in the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Spanish Parliament⁽⁵⁾ prior to the meeting of the 1990-Dublin European Council and in the Prime Minister's address to the Plenary Session right afterwards⁽⁶⁾, representatives of the main political parties showed no opposition to the Association Policy, but concern about its consequences for the Spanish economy (because of trade liberalisation), for the structural policy (due to the imminent integration of Eastern Germany regions) and for other dimensions of the European foreign policy (e.g. Latin America and the North of Africa).

In fact, before the meeting of the European Council in Dublin (June 1990), the Minister of Foreign Affairs had stated at the Parliamentary Commission the convenience to accommodate European solidarity with the Spanish interests in view of the unanimity requirement for the Agreements to be approved. This European Council finally agreed to open exploratory talks on Association Agreements with some CEECs, to broaden and intensify efforts on security and cooperation with the Mediterranean countries under the framework of the upcoming Conference for the Security and Cooperation in Europe, and to increase the aid earmarked for Latin America.(7)

Moreover, in November 1991, the Spanish government threatened to veto the conclusion of the European Agreements with Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia because the aid proposed for their iron and steel production and exports could negatively affect the Spanish sector, which was undergoing a severe restructuring process as well. Besides, further concessions on the textile and coal sectors had also been made. Spain finally accepted to sign the Agreements in exchange for a declaration that would permit the government to control Eastern imports by starting an antidumping process or applying a safeguard clause.(8) Actually, the Spanish government's priority was at this point the development of the cohesion principle in the framework of the Treaty of the European Union and the negotiation of the financial perspectives for 1993-1997.

3.2. The working out of the pre-accession strategy [↑]

The Spanish government's preference for postponing any decision on enlargement was reinforced by the fact that the 1990-1991 IGC had not achieved an agreement on significant institutional reforms and this issue was considered essential before the accession of new members. Also, its concern for cohesion policy increased with the negative result of the Danish referendum on the Maastricht Treaty in June 1992. Therefore, in the European Council held in Lisbon that month Spain acceded to admit the EFTA countries(9) as candidates provided that their accessions were conditioned to the ratification of the TEU and the approval of the financial perspectives. Besides, the candidates had to assume the objectives of the economic and political union and fulfil the convergence criteria. Spain also got the compromise to strengthen relations with the Maghreb.(10) At the Edinburgh Council of December 1992 Spain agreed to the start of negotiations with Austria, Finland, Norway and Sweden, although the Maastricht Treaty had not been ratified yet, in exchange for a rise of the ceiling of national contributions to the EU budget to 1.27% and new allocation of the cohesion funds that would be more favourable for Spain. The European Council also compromised to deal in their next meeting with the Commission's proposal for further action to promote CEECs future membership. (11)

With the financial perspectives approved and the Treaty of Union in force, the Spanish government took a stand with regard to EU Eastern enlargement focused on two premises: a) the 'widening' of the Union should not affect the deepening process it was undergoing (especially the achievement of the Economic and Monetary Union) and b) the necessary institutional reform should be carried out previously. "The European Community that Spain envisages cannot remain closed as club for rich people. But neither can it give in to the temptation of enlarging just to be larger... It must offer accession to the countries capable and wishful to assume the *acquis* and the *finalité politique* of the Community" (González Márquez, 1992/1993: 20). Thus, the CEECs should undergo further institutional and economic reforms first so that they could assume the objectives and responsibilities of the Political and Economic and Monetary Union. Besides, it was necessary, before any new enlargement, to take the pertinent institutional decisions so as to prevent the EU from modifying its structure with each new member, according to the Spanish Socialist MEP, Enrique Barón (Granell, 1993: 73).

However, when on the 3 May 1993 the Commission recommended to the Council to give a clear perspective for accession to Eastern countries in the upcoming meeting of the Heads of State in Copenhagen, the Spanish government supported the Commission's initiative and was in favour of giving the CEECs a clear reference of membership in the Community and of taking the necessary steps to speed up the process. (12)

The 1993 Copenhagen Council agreed that "the associated countries in Central and Eastern Europe that so desire shall become members of the European Union" but also established a set of conditions (the so-called Copenhagen criteria) which were very compatible with Spanish government's demands. The accession countries had to satisfy the political and economic conditions and be able to take on the obligations of membership including adherence to the aims of the political, economic and monetary union. Besides, the accessions would not take place unless the Union could absorb new members and provided that it did not affect negatively the integration process. The Spanish government also achieved that additional trade liberalisation measures were accompanied with the compromise to approximate laws in the associated countries to those applicable in the Community – in order to prevent possible distortions in competition – and that the Fifteen agreed to upgrade partnership between the Union and the Maghreb countries.(13)

In June 1994 in Corfu, a coalition of the Southern MSs forced the inclusion of Cyprus and Malta in the next round of enlargement, the compromise not to start negotiations before the 1996-1997 IGC on the institutional reform, and the agreement to further develop the EU Mediterranean policy.(14) The Essen Council at the end of the year, in exchange of Southern member states' support for the pre-accession strategy, agreed to solve the Spanish problem with regard to fishing policy (15), to ask the Commission to elaborate a report on the impact of enlargement upon the Community Policies, to initiate trade-liberalization talks with Mercosur, Chile and Mexico, and to design a global, flexible and multi-annual Mediterranean Policy similar to that of the CEECs, (although without the accession prospect).(16) Spain was permitting Eastern enlargement to get ahead but its key demands were being met.

3.3. On the stipulation of the accession terms ↑

From the outset of the Spanish Presidency of the European Council in the second half of 1995, Germany began to press to open negotiations with a selected number of CEECs. Holding the Presidency brought pressure to bear on the Spanish Government to work with the Commission in order to bring forward some sort of initiative. It was time to design the policy; the first applications for membership were being made and the EU had to take a decision on the policy for the designation of the candidates and the development of the negotiations. The Spanish government's policy proved to be quite dependent on this decision-making process and conditioned by the evolution of the negotiations of other related issues such as the institutional reform, the financial perspectives and the future of the common policies.

At the Plenary Session of the European Parliament on 15th November 1995, Prime Minister González outlined his starting stance with regards to the timing of the accessions and the selection of the candidates: "The candidates do not want the Union to be diluted for common policies dismantled (...) or the abolition of the Structural Funds", he said(17), "a larger Europe requires more Europe... and those who suggest a free-of-costs process are missing the point".(18) The Spanish government could accept a quick 'political membership' but with long transitional periods for the economic integration and with a compromise to guarantee the structural and agricultural policies.

The Spanish government intended to dilute the costs of the process at the same time as it tried to minimise the loss of receipts from the EU budget as a consequence of the CEECs' accessions. At the Madrid Summit in December, the European Council finally agreed to call for the Commission's opinions on the applicants and to start negotiations as soon as possible treating all candidates on equal terms. (19)

In 1996 the Popular Party won the general election and José María Aznar became Prime Minister. The previous discourse of the Socialist government had usually stressed the general interest of the Union and the government's European spirit, but that of the conservative new government was full of references to the national interest, linking from the beginning the success of Eastern enlargement to the solution of the financial aspects, the institutional reform and the guarantee of the common policies. In the words of the newly appointed Foreign Minister:

... the EU is still the main factor of peace and stability for the continent... the unique real prospect for peace and prosperity for the Eastern republics... Enlargement... is a project assumed by all and supported by Spain, because we believe that the stability and prosperity of the continent depends on it. But it is a sensitive and complicate task, and, in order to carry it out successfully, the Government will defend the consolidation of the institutions and the *acquis communitaire*... and averting from financial troubles... The Spanish Government thinks that the European Union should count on the necessary resources to face such an ambitious project. (Matutes, 1996: 103-104).

When the European Council meeting at Luxembourg in December 1997 agreed to initiate the negotiations with the group of candidates proposed by the Commission in Agenda 2000 and to open the 'screening process' with all of them, José María Aznar showed both Spain's satisfaction for having contributed to the definitive burial of the European division born in Yalta and Spanish special solidarity towards the future members of the Union, due to its own historic experience (Torreblanca, 1999/2000: 113). However, it is worth remarking that some progress had previously been made with regards to institutional reform, the financial aspects and the common policies. The Treaty of Amsterdam (2 October 1997) had convened a new intergovernmental conference to solve the question of institutional reform. Spain had agreed to postpone the decision against its own preferences, in exchange for the extension of the Ioannina agreement until the next accession, and the Council's compromise (Declaration 50) to work out a solution for the Spanish claim in the meanwhile (Elorza, 2001: 91). As for the financial aspects and the Common policies, Agenda 2000 (20) (presented to the Council in July) analysed the effects of enlargement on the application of the Common policies and the next financial perspectives, guaranteeing the agricultural and structural policies in spite of enlargement, and thus, calming down the most would-be affected incumbents. Anyway, there was still a long road to go before an agreement was reached on the financial perspectives; the Spanish government's strong defence of the structural and cohesion policy faced Germany's preference for re-nationalising some common policies and the United Kingdom's wish to reduce the Community budget.

Once the financial perspectives were approved in Berlin in March 1999, the Spanish PM reiterated his desire to speed up negotiations with the the first wave of candidate countries and to start them with the rest of the CEECs. On 7th April 1999, he told the Hungarian Prime Minister, Viktor Orban, in Budapest that he wished Hungary's accession to the Union took place as soon as possible. On the 13th July he insisted once more, this time before the Bulgarian President Meter Stoyanov, that Spanish position for the Helsinki Council (December 1999) would be to defend a global negotiation process with all the candidates according to the 'regatta' principle, which established the same departure point for all, although the development of the process would depend on each one's progress. He also advocated starting negotiations with Bulgaria before the end of the year. In September, on the occasion of the Polish Prime Minister's, Jerzy Buzek, visit to Madrid, Aznar stated that Spain had always shown its support to Poland's accession to the EU and wished it became true as soon as possible.⁽²¹⁾ Finally, the institutional issue was also settled in Nice in December 2000, after the Spanish Prime Minister had threatened to veto any agreement that did not meet Spanish demands; Spain lost a Commissioner but increased its voting weight in the European Council more than the other large states (Elorza, 2001: 95).

4. Appropriateness and justification [↑]

The rationalist assumptions present in IR Liberal theory and Intergovernmentalist approaches to the study of the EU offer a good explication for the 'dispositional dimension' (Carlsnaes, 1992) of Spanish enlargement policy, that is the choices that the government made on the basis of the national interest with the purpose of getting the most satisfactory outcomes for Spain once the process had been launched. But they fail to explain why they never blocked the process or threatened to do so in order to achieve their goals. The reason does not seem to be that it was considered a highly costly option, with the risk of losing support in other negotiations, given the strong preference of some key member states as Germany.

Two reasons for this can be identified. Firstly, the Spanish government took a rather different stand in order to get its way on the occasion of EFTA enlargement despite facing similar strong preferences. During the Portuguese Presidency of the Council in the first semester of 1992, some key member states became very interested in dealing as soon as possible with the membership applications of Austria, Finland, Norway and Sweden (since the agreement on the European Economic Area had been declared contrary to the Treaty of Rome by the European Court of Justice). Then, the Spanish government openly showed its opposition to deal with these applications if the financial perspectives presented by the Commission were not approved first -in the view of the net contributors' reluctance to increase the Community budget.⁽²²⁾ Both the idea of the EFTA enlargement before the IGC on the institutional reform and the context of a restrictive budget made Spain believe that the compromise acquired in Maastricht on a cohesion policy as well as its position inside the future European Union might become threatened. As the European Commission's FSU (Forward Studies Unit) had reckoned, enlargement was not to take place at the best moment for Spain insofar as it would imply the consolidation of the 'Nordic perspective' (a large little-cohesive Custom Union with its axis increasingly displaced to the North).⁽²³⁾

In the Council of General Affairs celebrated in Brussels on the 11 May 1992, the Ministers from Spain, Portugal and Ireland expressed their governments' decision to veto any decision on the EFTA enlargement unless a satisfactory agreement on the cohesion funds was achieved.⁽²⁴⁾ The Spanish government also blocked the Common Position on the fishing chapter in the negotiations with Norway at the beginning of 1994 and, again in December, Felipe González, backed by the Spanish Parliament, stated that the instruments of ratification of the Accession Treaty of Austria, Finland, Sweden and Norway would not be deposited unless the Spanish transitional period for the Common

Fisheries Policy effectively came to an end.(25)

10

Secondly, the assumption that the Spanish government could regard opposition to Eastern enlargement as a highly costly option implies that it *was* considered as a *possible* action that eventually was not taken due to negative expected consequences. However, from 1989 to 1992, most Spanish representatives' statements speak for the fact that they took Eastern enlargement for granted. The President of the EP Institutional Committee in charge of preparations for 1990-91 IGC, the Spaniard Marcelino Oreja, thought it was advisable to take a stand on the membership aspirations of these countries, although they were not prepared to become members in the short term. He also asserted that Spain had an important role to play in a Europe whose centre was moving Eastward (Oreja, 1990: 36-44). In a session of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Spanish Parliament prior to the meeting of the 1990 Dublin European Council, representatives of the main political parties regarded the association agreements and the IGC on the political union as the first steps leading to enlargement.(26) After the 1992 Lisbon Council, the Spanish President explained in the Spanish Parliament that the CEECs should undergo further institutional and economic reforms in order to be able to face the objectives of the Political Union and those of the EMU and become members of the Union in a future.(27) Thus it does not seem as if opposing Eastern enlargement was ever considered an *option*, a view that is being confirmed in the interviews conducted with relevant policy-makers. (28)

4.1. The conception of self in a social role and the force of moral arguments

From a constructivist perspective, it could be said that the government never opposed Eastern enlargement because it was the appropriate thing to do according to the EC collective identity, a policy preference that responded to a contextual rationality. "The idea of community seeks to dictate a different type of intercourse among the actors belonging to it, a type of self-limitation in their self-perception, a re-defined self-interest, and hence re-defined policy goal." (Weiler, 1991: 2480) As far as Eastern Enlargement is concerned, being part of the Community implied a desire to substitute age-old rivalries with a search for peace, stability and democracy. From the culture of the EC/EU developed over time, a reflex to look for the common interests of all members, not just for the interests of individual countries (Friis, 1998). As Sedelmeier (2001) highlights, from the origins of the EC to the end of the Cold War, the EC policy-makers had discursively constructed a particular role of the Community in its relations with the CEECs that ascribed to the EC a special responsibility towards Eastern Europe. This constitutive norm, which had become part of the collective identity, implied a fundamental regulative one: not to oppose the accommodation of the CEECs' interests (including membership) on the grounds of self-interest of the old member states. The legitimacy of the EU's collective decision dealing with these demands should not derive from its efficiency in the promotion of the interests and preferences of the members, but should be considered as a matter of identity and justice.

It is more difficult to assess whether the Spanish policy-makers refrained from such an action just because they feared high social and reputational costs, or, to put it differently, to what extent this element of EU identity affected their preference formation or just to their behaviour. "It is not expected that collective identity shapes concrete preferences" (Schimmelfennig 2001: 62). The collective identity might become a resource for enlargement advocates to justify their selfish goals with references to institutional norms or identity, with other actors acquiescing to such initiatives not because they were persuaded by the normative validity of such arguments, but in order to avoid the social and reputational costs of non-compliance with community norms.

In the case study of Spain, Spanish policy-makers show themselves to be very concerned about their reputation in the EU, and they acknowledge in interviews their continuous effort to accommodate their behaviour to the EU standards and expectations. But, in the case of Eastern enlargement, it also seems that the construction of a national identity, quite compatible with the collective identity of the EU, might have also had its effect on Spanish enlargement policy.

When in 1976 the Spanish government showed its interest in applying for EC membership, it had to tackle some members' reluctance based upon national economic interests. And it did so confronting these pragmatic arguments with moral arguments based on the promotion of democracy and the spirit of the Treaty of Rome potentially addressed to *all* the European nations (Bassols, 1995: 156-157). Eventually, the Council of Ministers decided in September 1977 to call for the Commission's opinion on the accession of Spain, underlying the priority of the political features of Spanish candidature, in particular the contribution to the development and the consolidation of the democratic processes in Southern Europe, as well as the new dimension that the construction of Europe would acquire (Bassols, 1995: 201). Therefore, the Spanish government may have considered that it could not legitimately oppose Eastern enlargement given the similarity to its own accession to the moral foundation – peace, stability and support for democracy - of this round of enlargement. Insofar as Spanish political elites and public opinion had always regarded Europe as the best means for consolidating these values and overcoming obstacles rooted in the past, they did not have the moral authority to deny the same perspective to the candidate countries.

In the horizon of the coming new century, enlargement of the Union to the Eastern and Central countries... will become true. Europe will be reconciled with its own history and this great reunification will become a factor of security and stability for the whole continent. The challenge is moral, historical, and geopolitical, more than economic or financial. (González Márquez, 1995-1996: 17).

Our party supports the integration of all the democratic Eastern and Central European Countries in the Union. Moreover, it is a priority for us as long as, on assuming all the 'acquis communautaire', they have acquired an indisputable right to become members that nobody has moral authority to deny. This is the main reason to undoubtedly support their membership. (José M^a Aznar, at the Spanish Parliament 1994) (29)

We regard enlargement as a serious political project of reunification of a Europe that can only be conceived of as united. We cannot conceive of Europe without Warsaw, Budapest, or Prague; it would be a partial Europe in little accordance with its history", "Europe has been our political horizon, our reference of progress, liberty, democracy and social justice. We regarded Europe as the way to consolidate our democracy and advance in the structural reforms... A country with this perspective cannot deny the same perspective to the current candidates (Josep Piqué, Spanish Foreign Minister, at the Spanish Parliament, 2000) (30)

Not only does this argumentative line appear in the official statements, but the same reasons for the policy were also given by Spanish policy-makers in personal interviews. EFTA enlargement was deemed different insofar as these countries were considered to be 'rich candidates', who did not need accession as a means to consolidate democracy and pursue socio-economic development; therefore, blocking or threatening to veto the process was considered a legitimate negotiating tool. By contrast, this political action was not considered legitimate in the case of EU Eastern enlargement since moral arguments spoke against it.

In any case, Spanish interests could be defended in the accession negotiations themselves. In the case of Spain's own accession, negotiations started quite soon (February 1979) but the process was long and tough, with the United Kingdom blocking the process in order to get a solution to its financing problem and with France, Greece and Italy forcing compensations for its negative effects. Finally, it is worthy of remark the Spanish government's stand on the eve of the 1993 Copenhagen European Council. If it were the case that they just *could not* oppose enlargement, why did they not limit themselves to accept the agreement? The Spanish State Secretary for the European Community, Carlos Westendorp, not only expressed Spanish support for the Commission's proposal but also advocated a speeding up of the process, stating that the EU should not be 'stingy' but offer the CEECs a clear perspective and an ambitious goal,⁽³¹⁾ even in the knowledge of possible negative consequences and with institutional reform still pending.

4.2. Policy-making as an endogenous continuous process

We have seen to what extent social identity and moral arguments may have weighed on the decision not to oppose Eastern enlargement. Once the process was initiated we have also observed that the Spanish government tried to get the most satisfactory outcomes, which rather speaks for an instrumental rationality. But, we can also see some features of another mode of social action, the logic of justification in the development of Spanish policy. A communicative conception of rationality 'does not solely designate consistency or preference-driven action based on calculus of success, nor merely norm-conformity or accordance with entrenched standards of appropriateness, but rather public reason-giving: when criticised plans of action can be justified by explicating the relevant situation in a legitimate manner' (Eriksen and Fossum, 2003, 4). We have been able to observe that the policy was not only built endogenously to the policy formation in the EU and influenced by it but also that national preferences and claims were presented in a way that might be considered legitimate by the others.

For instance, the linkage between the pre-accession strategy with the CEECs and the Mediterranean policy was justified by the Spanish Prime Minister in the following terms:

We have confirmed the EU compromise in favour of an equal treat for the East of Europe and the South of the Mediterranean Sea, as long as they are the main neighbouring areas and the peace here depends on the stability there. All the members of the Union are equally compromised with this double challenge because the last enlargement to Fifteen has not meant to alter our priorities, but to widen our common responsibilities... This new European reality requires from us to assume the responsibilities of our external projection. In fact, the German Presidency has approached the EU's relationship with their neighbours from a global and balanced perspective. The Spanish Government has unambiguously supported a strategy towards the CEECs which makes their accession feasible. ⁽³²⁾

Also, with the occasion of the 2000 IGC on the institutional reform, the quite 'aggressive' negotiating style of the conservative Prime Minister was carefully thwarted with numerous statements by Spanish representatives clarifying the action: It was not that Spain opposed an enlargement that in fact it understood better than any other member state due to its own historic experience; it was only defending a fair institutional agreement which had been pursued for long (Piqué, 2001: 60-63).

From the very outset of the transition process in Eastern countries, the Spanish government, political elites and society took their future accession to the European Community (EC) for granted and never questioned it. However, the government could not take a stand on which countries the first round of enlargement should comprise or when negotiations should start, given that these points depended on future developments very difficult to be anticipated. Actually, in 1992 the State Secretary for the European Community had advised the Spanish Permanent Representative to stand aside in the 'fight' over the borders of the future Europe and the timing of the enlargement process and not to define preferences till further progress of the debates⁽³³⁾. As late as 1994 the representatives of the main Spanish political parties reproached the Socialist government that its policy was not stemming from a thorough analysis of the consequences of enlargement.⁽³⁴⁾ In the address of the Spanish President to the Parliament that December, the opposition leader, José M^a Aznar, insisted that the decision to be taken on the timing, manner and scope of the process was not indifferent for Spain. ⁽³⁵⁾

It was not until the Plenary Session of the European Parliament on the 15th November 1995, under the Spanish Presidency of the European Council, that Felipe González outlined his position on the issue: "A vaster Europe requires more Europe (...) The candidates do not want the Union to be diluted for common policies dismantled (...) or the abolition of the structural funds", he said;⁽³⁶⁾ they wished a progressive integration of their economies with adequate transitional periods, but an immediate political membership. Unlike other member states, Spain wanted enlargement "to strengthen not to weaken (the Union)".⁽³⁷⁾ This stance implied a half-way solution that took into account both some MSs' claims for speeding up the process and Spanish preferences for the defence of the structural and cohesion policies and the prioritisation of the EU 'deepening' process over its 'widening'. The immediate political accession for all the candidates gave moral legitimacy to the proposal, as it was justified on universally-valid principles such as non-discrimination or the promotion of democracy and peace through membership. A slower economic integration was legitimised in impartial (not self-interested) terms of efficiency: it would reduce the negative transitional effects, with a better adaptation of the CEECs' economies to the Single Market and a more limited impact on the structural and agricultural policies. However, the arguments did not gain much support and, in the end, the Spanish Presidency proposal for the Madrid Summit (December 1995) was to fix a date to start negotiations with all the candidates and to advance depending on their particular progress ('regatta' principle). In the end, the agreement at the European Council was to start negotiations as soon as possible and treat all the candidates on equal terms.⁽³⁸⁾

Not only did Spanish government define its policy endogenously during the process of interaction, taking into account and challenging the others' claims, but it also accepted an agreement based on a better argument that all the member states could live with (Eriksen, 2000: 57). This was not the only time that the better argument might have worked to accommodate some points of view and values, which afterwards made further co-operation possible (Eriksen, 2000: 59). The Spanish government's revealed preferences in favour of the 'regatta' principle did not either fit exactly with the 1997 Luxembourg decision to start official negotiations only with the candidates proposed by the Commission, however the acceptance of this kind of 'working agreement' would make further cooperation possible. We find another instance when, on the occasion of the Draft of the Common Position on the free movement of people in 2001, the President of the Spanish Government José María Aznar tried to get a compromise on the cohesion policy. The Spanish government linked its support to the German proposal for a transitional period of at least five years for the free movement of Eastern workers to the recognition of the 'statistical effect' that enlargement would have upon the application terms of the cohesion policy, and a compromise to take it into account in the upcoming negotiations of this chapter and of the financial perspectives. However, his arguments were challenged by other member states that regarded this action as definite proof of Spain's opposition to enlargement exclusively motivated by self-interest. Finally, José M^a Aznar accepted the transitional

period in the 2001 Gothenburg Council, although he had not achieved his goal.

14

5. Concluding remarks

The Spanish government's decision to support Eastern enlargement in spite of the expected costs does not seem to respond to an instrumental rationality, although this offers a satisfactory explanation for the 'dispositional' dimension of the policy. Spanish policy-makers acted as interest-maximisers in dealing with the allocation of the costs and they tried to get concessions in other issues given that other member states were more interested in (and benefited more from) Eastern enlargement. However, some relevant features of the policy remain unexplained, specially the fact that the Spanish government never vetoed Eastern enlargement in order to achieve its goals or whenever it did not get these concessions. The threat to veto the institutional reform in Nice in 2000 in order to increase Spanish weight in the European institutions cannot be considered a veto to the enlargement process – although, if agreement had not been reached, accessions would not have been feasible. In fact, the Spanish government used this argument to press the others to accept its demands; it was a priority for the Spanish government to settle a question that for so long (since Spain's own accession) they had unsuccessfully tried to solve. Neither was the incident on the occasion of the draft of the Common Position on the free movement of people in 2001 a veto to the enlargement process; the Spanish government offered its support to other incumbents' preferences in exchange for their support to Spanish preferences with regard to the cohesion policy. In neither case were the CEECs' preferences or interests the object of the veto. In fact, the government in both cases had to make big efforts to explain this point, because "at first opportunity, even in the face of non-relevant technical objections to secondary charters, Spain has been accused of being contrary to enlargement, not only because of its peripheral geographic situation, but also due to its alleged competitiveness in the allocation of the structural funds" (Viguera, 2001: 73).

Therefore, in order to better understand Spanish Eastern enlargement policy we should also consider its 'intentional' (perceptions and values) and 'structural' dimensions (Carlsnaes, 1992). We have analysed to what extent social identity and moral arguments might have mattered in the decision not to oppose Eastern enlargement and the presence of the mode of social action known as logic of justification in the policy-making process. Because this mode of social action appears in practice intermingled with the other two, namely the logics of consequentiality and appropriateness, the outcome is more likely to be a working agreement rather than a rational consensus. Therefore, a theoretical approach based upon communicative action might offer inclusive mechanisms to deal with the different rationalities that might be more relevant in such a political action, i.e. instrumental, contextual and communicative rationality, respectively, and the related modes of social action, i.e. consequentiality, appropriateness and justification.

When a decision is taken in a collective communicative process, actors try to seek a consensus on factual and normative matters, that is: (1) on the actual situation and the cause-and effect relationships between goals and means; and (2) on which norms apply under given circumstances or which principles should guide the policy under discussion. For factual statements, validity means the same as truth. For normative statements 'impartiality and consistency are necessary conditions for validity' (Elster, 1992); consistency with previous acts and statements as well as with principles and norms by all accepted. We have observed in the course of the process that member states often phrase their arguments in impartial terms (as not pursuing their own self-interest). We have also seen that, once a normative argument is used, the speaker is 'stuck with it' (Elster: 1992).

In Schimmelfennig's opinion, the stronger the institutional component of the environment, the more often the actors will choose "arguing", the more they have to justify their claims through social values and norms in order to pursue their interests effectively, and the more successfully they will be able to counter the effects of bargaining power with the powers of argument. But he asserts that using arguments is not the same as engaging in a Habermasian "cooperative search for truth"; on the contrary, actors use their arguments strategically, i.e. they choose arguments that are both suitable to back their claims and promise to resonate well with their particular audience (Schimmelfennig, 2000, 2003). It is beyond the limits and aims of this paper to identify the actual motivations for the Spanish government, to justify its actions or accept other's arguments, but it is worth remarking that they feel the need to do it in order to garner support and legitimacy, with a corresponding impact upon the policy-making. In my opinion, with respect to communicative action, arguments do not have to be regarded as true for the person who advances them, nor do they have to derive from its own conviction; they just have to be seen as reasonable for the others. After all, the goal of a political deliberation need not be the discovery of universal values or the actual motivations of the actors, but rather to facilitate the conditions necessary to achieve an agreement considered legitimate by all.

Finally, we have also confirmed how Spanish Eastern enlargement policy has evolved in parallel with the process of negotiation and policy formation in the EU. Therefore, member states' policy contents should not be taken as fixed and exogenously given but instead as endogenous to states' interaction within the EU. The Spanish government approached the decision-making process ready to be swayed by reasons that could conflict with its antecedent preferences and interests, aiming to defend and criticize policies in terms of considerations that others might have reasons to accept (according to their own preferences and commitments), and prepared to cooperate in accordance with the results of the discussion (Cohen, 1998: 100). All of these might speak for the practice of deliberation within the EU. Thus we can see the EC evolving from a problem-solving entity, with its legitimacy deriving from the promotion of the interests of the member states, into a polity in its own right, seeking to establish a fair system of co-operation founded on fundamental rights and democratic procedures for deliberation and decision-making.

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Endnotes

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(1) Exports and Direct Foreign investment of Spain and the UE to the CEECS, 1990-1999, Carmela Martín, in Spanish newspaper *Expansión* on November 16th 2000.

(2) *El País*, 17 November 1989: *Felipe González intenta consensuar con Aznar y Suárez la política española sobre los países del Este*.

(3) *El País*, 3 December 1989: *Los motivos de la Moncloa*.

(4) In his Inaugural Address to the Spanish Parliament on 4th December 1989, cited in Torreblanca, 2001b: 65.

(5) Foreign Affairs Commission 5, 16 April 1990. Session Diary of the Spanish Congress 69, IV Legislature.

(6) Plenary Session 43, 27 June 1990. Session Diary of the Spanish Congress 47, IV Legislature.

(7) 'European Council at Dublin, 25-26 June, Conclusions of the Presidency', European Parliament, SN 60/1/90

(8) *El País*, 23 Nov 91: *La CE rubrica los Acuerdos de Asociación con el Este*

(9) I will use this term to refer to Austria, Finland, Norway and Sweden.

(10) 'European Council at Lisbon, 26-27 June, Conclusions of the Presidency', *Bulletin of the EC* PE 158-180.

(11) 'European Council at Edinburgh, 11-12 December, Conclusions of the Presidency', EP, SN 456/92.

(12) *El País*, 14 May 1993: *La ampliación no debe servir para cargarse la CE*.

(13) 'European Council at Copenhagen, 21-22 June 1993, Conclusions of the Presidency', EP, SN 180/93

(14) 'European Council at Corfu, 24-25 June 1994, Presidency Conclusions', EP, SN 150/94.

(15) The Council urged the Fishing Ministers to adopt the necessary technical mechanisms to make possible the Spanish full integration in the Common Fishing Policy in 1996 (reducing the transitional period established till 2003).

- (16) 'European Council at Essen, 9-10 December 1994, Presidency Conclusions', SN 300/94.
- (17) Agence Europe, 15 November 1995: Presidents Haensch, Santer and Gonzalez emphasize the ambition of the Union's plans for entering the 21st century.
- (18) El País, 16 November 1995: *González asegura que la ampliación de la UE al Este exige profundizar la cohesión interna.*
- (19) 'European Council at Madrid, 15-16 December 1995, Presidency Conclusions', SN 400/95.
- (20) European Commission (1997) "Agenda 2000: For a Stronger and Wider Union". Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications.
- (21) Statements got from Task Force: Positions of the Member States, <http://www.europarl.eu.int/enlargement/members/e.htm>
- (22) El País, 5 May 92: *Felipe González supedita la ampliación de la CE al cumplimiento de los acuerdos de Maastricht.*
- (23) El País, 23 May 92: *A España le asusta una CE ampliada*
- (24) El País, 12 May 92: *España bloqueará la ampliación de la Comunidad si no recibe los fondos de cohesión.*
- (25) El País, 20 Nov 94: *España amenaza con no permitir la ampliación de la Unión Europea.*
- (26) Foreign Affairs Commission 5, 16 April 1990. Session Diary of the Spanish Congress 69, IV Legislature.
- (27) Plenary Session 198, 1 July 1992. Session Diary of the Spanish Congress 204, IV Legislature.
- (28) Interviews with enlargement advisers for the Spanish government and deputies of the Secretary of State for European Affairs are being carried out under the framework of the CIDEL project.
- (29) Plenary Session 116, 21 December 1994. Session Diary of the Spanish Congress 117, V Legislature.
- (30) Joint Committee for European Affairs, sessions 2 (3 Oct 200) and 4 (28 Nov 2000), Session Diary of the Spanish Congress, VII Legislature.
- (31) El País, 14 May 1993: *La ampliación no debe servir para cargarse la CE.*
- (32) Plenary Session 116, 21 December 1994. Session Diary of the Spanish Congress 117, V Legislature.
- (33) El País, 23 May 92: *A España le asusta una CE ampliada.*
- (34) Plenary Session 84, 29 June 1994. Session Diary of the Spanish Congress 85, V Legislature.
- (35) Plenary Session 116, 21 December 1994. Session Diary of the Spanish Congress 117, V Legislature.
- (36) Agence Europe, 15 November 1995: Presidents Haensch, Santer and Gonzalez emphasize the

ambition of the Union's plans for entering the 21st century.

(37) El País, 16 November 1995: *González asegura que la ampliación de la UE al Este exige profundizar la cohesión interna.*

(38) 'European Council at Madrid, 15-16 December 1995, Presidency Conclusions', SN 400/95.

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Table I

	Rational Choice	Sociological institutionalism	Communicative Action
Goal of the political action	<u>Logic of consequences</u> : actors act purposely to reach their objectives, which are fixed a priori as a result of the anticipation of the consequences of a political action.	<u>Logic of appropriateness</u> : actors act according to their role within a community as a result of habit or a particular identity.	<u>Logic of justification</u> : actors seek to reach an agreement through the assessment of arguments deemed legitimate by all parties involved.
Rationality	<u>Instrumental</u> : actors are considered rational when they pursue their material and ideal welfare with their actions.	<u>Contextual</u> : actors are considered rational when their actions derive from the conception of self in a social role.	<u>Communicative</u> : actors are considered rational when they are able to explain and justify their actions.
Mode of interaction	<u>Bargaining</u> : actors seek their respective purposes and engage into interaction in order to induce the others to accept their claims. Threats to veto, linkages between issues and side-payments are usual instruments of negotiation.	<u>Role conformity</u> : actors consider what they are expected to do according to their social roles, the norms to be applied and the values of the community to which they belong.	<u>Arguing</u> : actors seek consensus and engage into communication for the purpose of convincing the others, i.e. to make them to change beliefs about factual or normative statements.
Type of outcome	<u>Compromise</u> : although parties might not get exactly what they want, each regards the result as better than no outcome at all. How much the various actors have to deviate from their opening position depends on the strength of their bargaining power, i.e. the resources at their disposal, and their ability to conduct the bargaining process.	<u>Consent</u> : issuing from a successful search for collective self-understanding, it expresses self-reflection and resolve on a form of life.	<u>Working agreement</u> : the parties clarify arguments and challenge the reasons given in order to reach higher degrees of understanding and a provisional agreement to make further cooperation possible. The better argument is the one that generates more support. <u>Rational consensus</u> : it expresses the right thing to do according to universally-valid standards. Actors appeal to the force of a norm or a principle on justifying a political action and agreement is reached round the better argument, that which convinces all the parties.
Legitimacy of the collective decision	It relies on its <u>efficiency</u> . A collective decision should promote the interests and preferences of the members and solve their problems in a more efficient way.	It is a matter of <u>identity</u> . Collective decisions develop and protect the sense of <u>wenness</u> , accordingly defining common goals and visions and establishing bonds of solidarity.	Collective decisions rely on a universal conception of <u>justice</u> , based on the respect and entrenchment of fundamental rights and a fair system of cooperation and deliberation.
Justification of the decision	<u>On its utility</u> : a policy decision is justified on its efficiency in reaching a goal (pragmatic arguments).	<u>On values</u> : a policy decision is justified with ethical arguments stemming from a given cultural context and the shared collective identity.	<u>On rights</u> : a policy decision is justified with moral arguments stemming from universally-valid standards and democratic procedures for deliberation and decision-making.

Elaborated from concepts developed in Elster, 1992; Elster, 2000; Eriksen, 1999; Eriksen, 2003; Eriksen&Fossum, 2003; Fossum, 2000; Habermas, 1996; March & Olsen, 1998; Moravcsik, 1998 and Sjursen 2002.

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