

A topographic map of Europe, showing elevation contours and terrain. The map is rendered in shades of blue, yellow, and green, with blue representing lower elevations and yellow/green representing higher elevations. The map is centered on the continent of Europe, with the Atlantic Ocean to the west and the Mediterranean Sea to the south.

# *EU Expansion: Central and Eastern Europe*

Ainius Lašas

# Context (1)

1989

- Year of Revolutions: Poland, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria.
- The Baltic Way
- EU assistance program for the CEECs

## Context (2)

1990-1991

- Reunification of Germany
- Collapse of the Soviet Union
- Beginning of Yugoslavia wars
- Dissolution of the Warsaw Pact

*Challenges:* recession in Western economies, stabilization and transformation of the Eastern bloc (new political institutions, market-based economies), nuclear weapons, ethnic tensions, regional security and stability.



# Puzzle of Eastern Enlargement

- *Why did the EU decide to open its membership doors to the CEECs?*
  - Candidates' GDP per capita – 24% of the EU average
  - Redistribution of EU structural and cohesion funds, redistribution of votes in the Council of Ministers, flight of capital, influx of migrants, etc.
  - New dividing line? Members vs. neighbors?

# Dominant Explanations

- Economic interests (Vachudova 2005)
- Geopolitical concerns (Skalnes 2005)
- Institutional norms & identity:
  - European identity (Sjursen 2002; Sedelmeier 2005)
  - Rhetorical entrapment based on institutional norms (Schimmelfennig 2003)

# Alternative explanation

Collective guilt/responsibility of the Euro-Atlantic community over the “black trinity”: the Munich Agreement, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, and the Yalta-Potsdam Conferences.

# Collective Guilt (1)

## - *Historical-Psychological Legacies*

These are persistent emotional states shared by a group of political actors, which are intrinsically linked with past events and experiences vis-à-vis other groups of actors.

## - *Group Dynamics*

- Responsibility through membership in a group
- Responsibility for something not done  
(Arendt 1987)

# Collective Guilt (2)

## - *Operationalization –Victim Restitution*

- “The basic action tendency of guilt is to make repairs, to undo the bad one has caused” (Elster 1999).
- Norms constitute and regulate behavior  
(Checkel 2001; Sedelmeier 2005)



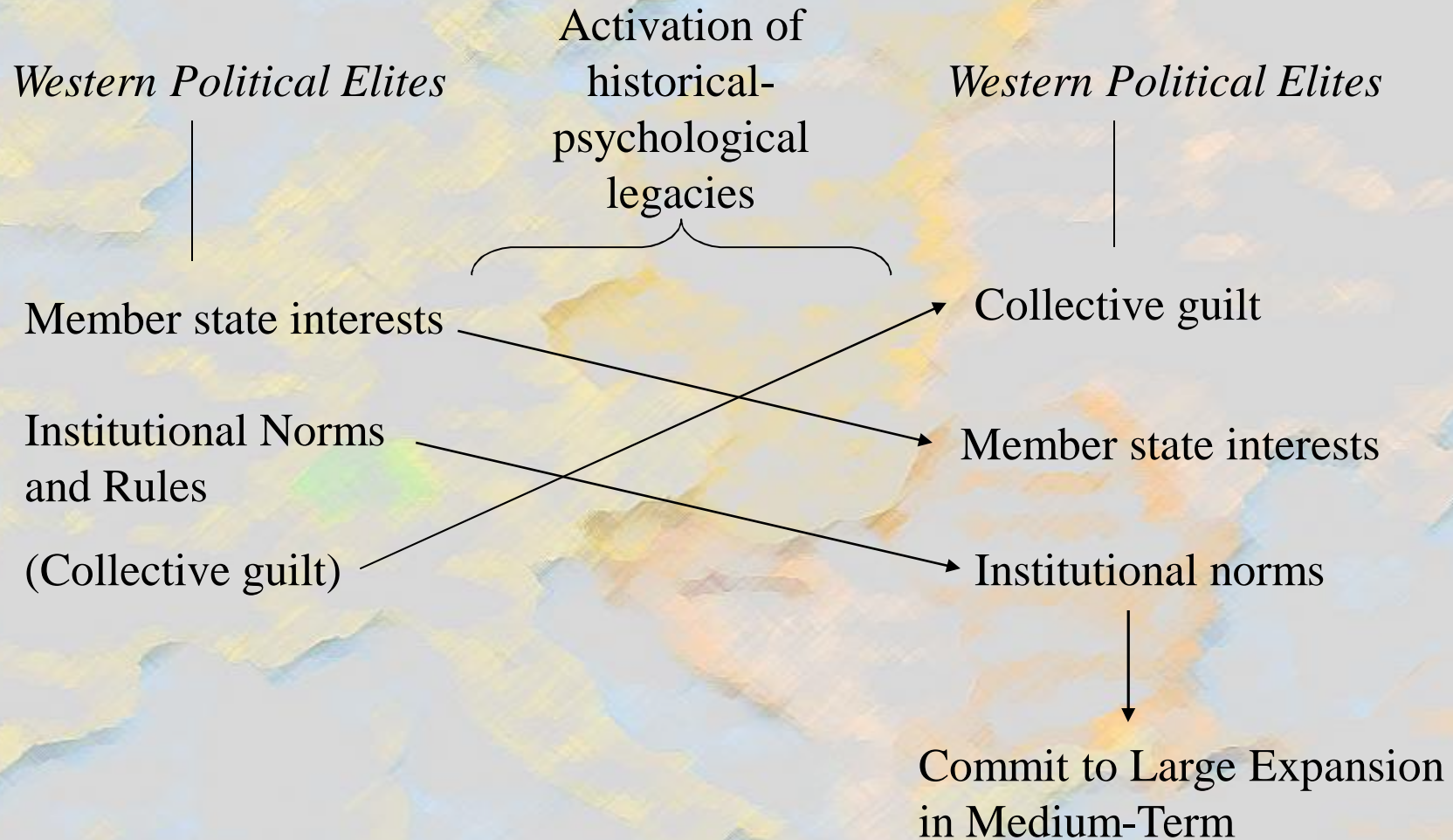
# Western Countries Involvement

<b>Level of Involvement</b>	<b>Munich</b>	<b>Molotov-Ribbentrop</b>	<b>Yalta-Potsdam</b>
<i>Direct Participation</i>	France, UK Germany, Italy	Germany	USA, UK
<i>Indirect Participation</i>		Italy	

# Countries Affected by the “BT”

<b>Countries</b>	<b>Munich</b>	<b>Mol-Ribbentrop</b>	<b>Yalta-Potsdam</b>
<i>Estonia</i>		X	X
<i>Latvia</i>		X	X
<i>Lithuania</i>		X	X
<i>Poland</i>		X	X
<i>Czech Republic</i>	X		X
<i>Slovakia</i>	X		X
<i>Romania</i>		X	X
<i>Hungary</i>			X
<i>Albania</i>			X
<i>Bulgaria</i>			X
<i>Slovenia</i>			X
<i>Serbia</i>			X
<i>Montenegro</i>			X
<i>Macedonia</i>			X
<i>Croatia</i>			X
<i>Bosnia-Herzegovina</i>			X

# Preference Order



# Hypotheses

1. *Extensive guilt-related discourse*
2. *The right of the CEECs to accede to the EU*
3. *Early commitment to enlarge*
4. *Regional approach to enlargement*

# Case Analysis

- Opening EU accession negotiations  
(Luxembourg Summit, 1997)

# Opening EU Accession Negotiations (1)

- Copenhagen Summit (June 1993):  
accession criteria
- EU Commission's "Agenda 2000" (July 1997) - First group of candidates (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland, and Slovenia)

# Opening EU Accession Negotiations (2)

- Objections led by Denmark and Sweden: too rigid and legalistic
- Danish Foreign Minister Niels Helveg Petersen: “Historic obligation to ensure Europe grows together.”
- German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel: “All three states will relatively quickly join the EU, and we will not admit formation of two groups from the Baltic states.”
- Alternative plan: formal negotiations and pre-screening process

# Opening EU Accession Negotiations (3)

- Luxembourg compromise adopted based largely on the Danish proposal
- Spanish Prime Minister José María Aznar:  
“This has been a political agreement of great significance that erases the unjust borders of the European continent drawn by Yalta.”
- Helsinki Summit (December 1999) – second wave of candidates (Bulgaria, Romania, Latvia, Lithuania, and Slovakia)
- Complete convergence of two groups by mid-2001.



# Research Findings

- Sensitivity among Western political elites: Germany, but not so much the UK and France
- Guilt discourse on both sides (public and private)
- Right to return to Europe.
- Early commitment? 1993.
- Regional differentiation? Cases of former Yugoslavia, Albania, Moldova and Ukraine.

# Conclusion

Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen (Copenhagen Council 2002):

“We decided to heal our continent. We decided to create one Europe. Today we have closed one of the bloodiest and darkest chapters in European history. Today we have opened a new chapter.”