

European Union enlargement: Power distribution implications of the new institutional arrangements

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Abstract. It is argued that enlargement challenges institutional balances and in particular relative powers of national actors within the European Union (EU). This article concentrates on the impact of future enlargement (with the current negotiating 12 candidates) on power distribution in the Council of Ministers of the European Union and the European Parliament based on the decisions taken at the Nice Summit in December 2000. It uses the Shapley-Shubik and Banzhaf indices to evaluate past and emerging power distributions in both the Council and in the Parliament. A brief section on Turkey (the thirteenth, non-negotiating, official candidate) is included to evaluate its possible impact in the case of admission to the Union.

Currently, enlargement is one of the most important issues on the agenda of the European Union (EU). A very important dimension of the ongoing debates concerns the institutional challenges resulting from the enlargement process. The critical question is whether the new members could pose a serious challenge to the existing institutional balances within the EU and endanger future institutional deepening.

While the EU has gone through various enlargements since its inception in 1958, it has also undertaken numerous institutional changes, which increasingly reflect its supranational character. At the Intergovernmental Conference held at Nice during December 2000, EU Member States displayed a new effort to introduce institutional changes which would prepare the Union for the upcoming admission of 12 candidate states.¹ The most important results of the intense debate about institutional change is how the future votes of the candidate countries in the European Parliament (EP) and Council of Ministers of the European Union (Council) will be determined and how the vote and seat shares of current Member States will be adjusted accordingly. Furthermore, the summit also introduced changes to the decision-making rules in the

Council. It is clear that these decisions will have significant consequences for power distribution within the decision-making organs of the Union.

The concern about whether 'old' members stand to gain or lose from enlargement and, accordingly, how new members will fare in terms of institutional representation is directly related to matters of 'power'. Hence it is claimed that 'one of the most sensitive issues surrounding expanding membership is that of power in EU institutions' (Baldwin et al. 1995: 8). This article concentrates on the impact of future enlargement on power distribution in the Council of Ministers of the European Union and the European Parliament based on the decisions taken at the Nice Summit. A future EU of 27 states (assuming all 12 applicant countries, with whom negotiations have been opened, will be accepted over time) is envisioned and this future picture is compared with the current 15-member EU. A brief section on the thirteenth applicant country, namely Turkey (with whom negotiations have not opened yet and which was not included in the institutional reform package at Nice), is included to evaluate its potential impact in the case of its entry into the Union. To evaluate the past and emerging power distribution in the Council and Parliament, we use the Shapley-Shubik² and Banzhaf³ Indices, which are effective indicators for demonstrating how many coalitions a chosen country can make to win.⁴ We consider these indices as reliable indicators of the relative powers of countries in EU institutions.⁵

Power literature

Analyses of power distribution within EU institutions have attracted considerable attention. These analyses primarily focus on the Council and the power distribution in this body under various majority requirements or (hypothetical) legislative rules (Bindseil & Hantke 1997; Felsenthal & Machover 1997; Hosli 1995, 1996, 1999; Lane & Maeland 2000; Nurmi et al. 1998; Widgrén 1994, 1995). Nonetheless, studies specifically examining the power distribution in the European Parliament are far less common (Hosli 1997; Nurmi 1997). Similarly, studies that investigate power distribution both in the European Parliament and in the Council or also in the Commission are very rare (Crombez 1996; Nurmi & Meskanen 1999).

Future enlargements and their implications for power distribution in the European Union have not received as much attention as the power distribution in the current context or changes in the power distribution due to previous enlargements. Although the majority of recent studies on power distribution in the Council – most notably the works of Hosli (1999) or Lane and Maeland (2000) – mention the issue of future enlargements, their contri-

butions remain limited since they do not consider concrete future enlargement scenarios in the European Union.

Nonetheless, there are studies that work with future scenarios. Among the works that investigate power distribution in case of future enlargements, Rapunio and Wiberg (1998) envision a two-wave enlargement. The first wave consists of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland whereas the second wave contains Cyprus, Estonia, Malta and Slovenia. The authors examine the power distribution in the Council of Ministers of the enlarged Union under different decision rules. They conclude that all Member States lose power if the enlargement proceeds as envisioned. Furthermore, they note that larger states will lose more than the others and argue that the more stringent the decision rule is, the more the larger states will lose and smaller states gain. Winkler (1998) also analyzes power distribution in the Council of Ministers in an enlarged Union.

Winkler's single-wave scenario includes Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia as the potential new members of the Union. Nevertheless, Winkler concludes that since there may exist simultaneously many coalitions on many different issue areas, there is not a single 'voting power' but instead various voting powers for countries depending on the coalitions centred around different issues.

Nurmi et al. (1998) focus on a three-stage enlargement and its possible consequences for power distribution in the Council of Ministers. In this study, the first stage includes Norway, Malta and Cyprus; the second stage is comprised of Poland and the Czech Republic; and finally the third stage covers Hungary and Slovakia. It is argued that enlargement decreases the power shares of the previous members and increases fractionalization. Also, if decision rules and voting procedures remain the same, the power of the collectivity to act (for the Council)⁶ will decrease.

Power analysis

We use the Shapley-Shubik and Banzhaf Indices in order to calculate and evaluate the power of national actors in the Council and in the EP. Measuring power is meaningful if a single party cannot mobilize a majority or qualified majority of votes. So, the very existence of coalitions within the EP and the Council leads us to examine the relative power of Member States.

In our case, parties are countries and they can form coalitions among themselves without any restrictions. At this stage we assume that each state can go into a coalition with every other state and it is possible to form any coalition. Both indices measure the voting power of countries in the institutions and

basically calculate the ratio between coalitions in which an actor is pivotal and all coalitions that are winning. The final results give us a picture of the power structure and power relations in the bodies we are studying. Overall the power indices add up to one which gives an easy understanding of existing power balances.

The Shapley-Shubik Index $\sigma(i)$ is calculated as follows:

$$\sigma(i) = \sum_s \frac{(n-s)!(s-1)!}{n!} [V(S) - V(S \setminus \{i\})],$$

where n is the number of parties, s is the size of coalition S , $V(S)$ is equal to 1 if S is a winning coalition, and $V(S)$ is equal to zero if S is a losing coalition. The Shapley-Shubik Index calculates the share of coalitions, which are winning due to the presence of party i in all coalitions, and prescribes a weight to a coalition in these calculations depending on its size.

For example, consider three parties, A, B and C (i.e., countries in our case) with votes 40, 40 and 20 respectively. Assume that the decision-making rule is simple majority (i.e., 51 votes). Then all coalitions A + B, A + C, B + C, A + B + C are winning ones, and each party makes any pair coalition winning. Hence, $\sigma(A) = \sigma(B) = \sigma(C) = 1/3$.

The Banzhaf Index, in fact, has a very similar logic to the Shapley-Shubik Index. It also aims to calculate the power of individual players by finding the ratio between the coalitions an individual player can make to win and all winning coalitions. However, with the Shapley-Shubik power index the coalitions in which a player i is pivotal are taken into account not in an equal way – the ‘weight’ of a coalition depends on its size. With the Banzhaf Index this ‘inequality’ is ‘omitted’. If b_i is the number of coalitions in which the player i is pivotal, i.e.,

$$V(S) - V(S \setminus \{i\}) = 1$$

then the Banzhaf Index $\beta(i)$ for player i is calculated as follows^{7,8}

$$\beta(i) = b_i / \sum b_j$$

It is worth emphasizing that the Shapley-Shubik Index has a game-theoretic justification while the Banzhaf Index has a very strong statistical justification.⁹ Both indices have been used in the analysis of power distribution issues. In fact, the results obtained by the Shapley-Shubik and Banzhaf indices are quite similar. This analysis will utilize both to give a more complete understanding.

Since at the Nice Summit the decision has been made on the use of a two-step procedure in the European Council, we will discuss this procedure and

show how it is formalized in evaluation of power indices. The two-step procedure necessitates a double majority both in terms of votes and in terms of population, while the quota for passing a decision is 255 out of 345 in terms of votes; a further threshold of 62 per cent of the total EU population has to be passed for getting a bill accepted in the Council. In the Parliament no such double-majority rule is applied. The traditional decision-making procedure, based solely on the simple majority of seats, is still in use.

In the evaluation of power indices it is necessary to re-define the winning coalition to fit to the above procedure. A particular coalition can be evaluated as a winning one if it has the necessary number of votes and the necessary quantity of population. Namely, each representative i is prescribed two integers: the number of votes v_i given to a particular country and the population ω_i of the country (measured as a percentage of total EU population). The coalition S is considered to be winning, if

$$1) \quad \sum_{i \in S} v_i > \text{Quota in votes} = 255,$$

and

$$2) \quad \sum_{i \in S} \omega_i > \text{Threshold in population} = 62\%,$$

for representatives in the coalition S .

So, if both 1) and 2) hold, then $V(S) = 1$, and $V(S) = 0$ otherwise.

As an example, consider three countries A, B, and C with votes 40, 40 and 20 respectively. Let the decision rule at the first step be a simple-majority one (i.e., 51 votes). Let the population of the countries be 20 per cent, 20 per cent and 60 per cent respectively. Assume again that the decision-making rule is a simple-majority one (i.e., 51 per cent). Now, the winning coalitions are only A + C, B + C, A + B + C. Coalition A + B does not pass the threshold in population (51 per cent), thus it is not winning if the two-stage procedure applies.

In this case, the Shapley-Shubik Index has the following values: $\sigma(A) = \sigma(B) = \frac{1}{6}$, $\sigma(C) = \frac{2}{3}$. The values of the Banzhaf Index for the countries in this example are equal, respectively, to $\beta(A) = \beta(B) = 0.2$, $\beta(C) = 0.6$.

Retrospective analysis of power distribution

Table 1 shows the power distribution in the Council after the entrance of Austria, Sweden and Finland (see, e.g., Widgrén 1995: 126). Since this is the latest distribution covering all current members, we will compare the emerging power distribution after the entrance of the 12 applicant countries with

Table 1. Power distribution in the European Council from 1995 onwards

Member State	Shapley-Shubik Index (1995)	Banzhaf Index (1995)
Germany, Italy, UK, France	0.119	0.112
Spain	0.093	0.092
Netherlands, Portugal, Greece, Belgium	0.056	0.059
Sweden, Austria	0.044	0.049
Denmark, Finland, Ireland	0.033	0.036
Luxembourg	0.021	0.023

this table. Adjustment of votes in the Council and in the Parliament as well as the changing decision-making procedure in the Council will also be evaluated from the power distribution perspective.

When we contrast the original power indices above with the power indices emerging after the enlargement of the Union, we observe, naturally, a considerable decline (see Table 2). For instance, for the Council the power of Germany has dropped from 0.119 to 0.0872. This decline is valid for all of the 'old' members. Nonetheless, the relative powers of former members remain the same: for instance, Germany still has more than twice the power of Greece or Belgium and three times that of Ireland. Yet the entrance of new members decreases the power of all members.

Apart from this overall decline, a number of interesting points need to be highlighted. As for the Council, adjustment of votes and the bringing in of the new population requirement deserve special attention. For the adjustment of votes, it can clearly be seen that bigger states will be better off after the new voting weights are in use. Although the vote shares of the big states have also fallen significantly, vote shares of the smaller states have declined drastically when compared to the big states.¹⁰ This demonstrates that the entrance of the new members into the Union, at least for the Council, is very much compensated for by the vote shares of the smaller states. This in turn creates a bias in favour of the big states in terms of power distribution.

The population requirement, moreover, protects the power of the big members in the sense that it becomes nearly impossible to pass a decision from the Council without the support of at least one big state, although there will be as many as 27 members of the Council. Four big states will make up for 53 per cent of the total EU population once the applicant countries are included in the Union and thus a population requirement of 62 per cent seems to guard the power of the big states. This requirement, certainly, also serves to protect

Table 2. Power distribution in the European Council in case of enlargement

Countries	Power Distribution	
	Shapley-Shubik Index	Banzhaf Index
Germany	0.0872	0.0778
United Kingdom	0.0870	0.0778
France	0.0870	0.0778
Italy	0.0870	0.0778
Spain	0.0800	0.0742
Poland	0.0799	0.0742
Romania	0.0399	0.0426
Netherlands	0.0368	0.0397
Greece	0.0340	0.0368
Czech Republic	0.0340	0.0368
Belgium	0.0340	0.0368
Hungary	0.0340	0.0368
Portugal	0.0340	0.0368
Sweden	0.0281	0.0309
Bulgaria	0.0281	0.0309
Austria	0.0281	0.0309
Slovakia	0.0195	0.0218
Denmark	0.0195	0.0218
Finland	0.0195	0.0218
Ireland	0.0195	0.0218
Lithuania	0.0195	0.0218
Latvia	0.0110	0.0125
Slovenia	0.0110	0.0125
Estonia	0.0110	0.0125
Cyprus	0.0110	0.0125
Luxembourg	0.0110	0.0125
Malta	0.0082	0.0094

the compromise between the 'one man one vote' and 'one country one vote' principles, on which the Council is built.

The enlargement process, viewed as a whole, is bound to increase fractionalization within the institutions of the Union parallel to the increase in the number of (small) members. This, in turn, may decrease the power of the collectivity. Nurmi et al. (1998) argue that such a development would certainly

require serious consideration and necessitate further revisions of the decision-making procedures of the Union. In addition, the 62 per cent population requirement appears to be a major factor in decreasing the power of the collectivity to act. This additional rule in decision making decreases the number of possible coalitions needed to pass a decision.

Similar results are obtained in the case of power distribution in the European Parliament (see Table 3). The admission of the 12 applicant countries will lead to a decrease in the power shares of all the old members (see Table 4). Nevertheless, it is difficult to detect a systematic pattern of concessions, as in the case of the Council. The adjustment of votes appears to 'solidify' the 'one man one vote' principle of the EP. This is most clearly the case for Germany whose number of seats remains the same although the number of seats of other big states all decline. This seems to correct Germany's under-representation in the Parliament.

The lower majority requirement in the EP compared to the Council, and the lack of an additional population requirement, make the Parliament less vulnerable to possible crises in decision making. In this sense, the likelihood for the EP to act as a collectivity is much higher than the one for the Council. Also, the power distribution in the EP is closer to the actual population of

Table 3. Power distribution in the European Parliament from 1995 onwards

Member States	Shapley-Shubik Index	Banzhaf Index
Germany	0.168	0.166
Italy	0.145	0.144
United Kingdom	0.145	0.144
France	0.145	0.144
Spain	0.101	0.106
Netherlands	0.045	0.044
Belgium	0.037	0.037
Greece	0.037	0.037
Portugal	0.037	0.037
Sweden	0.032	0.032
Austria	0.030	0.031
Finland	0.023	0.024
Denmark	0.023	0.024
Ireland	0.021	0.022
Luxembourg	0.008	0.009

Table 4. Power distribution in the European Parliament in case of enlargement

Countries	Power	Distribution
	Shapley-Shubik Index	Banzhaf Index
Germany	0.1462	0.1459
United Kingdom	0.1013	0.0996
France	0.1013	0.0996
Italy	0.1013	0.0996
Spain	0.0681	0.0674
Poland	0.0681	0.0674
Romania	0.0439	0.0441
Netherlands	0.0329	0.0332
Greece	0.0288	0.0292
Czech Republic	0.0261	0.0265
Belgium	0.0288	0.0292
Hungary	0.0261	0.0265
Portugal	0.0288	0.0292
Sweden	0.0235	0.0239
Bulgaria	0.0221	0.0225
Austria	0.0221	0.0225
Slovakia	0.0168	0.0172
Denmark	0.0168	0.0172
Finland	0.0168	0.0172
Ireland	0.0155	0.0159
Lithuania	0.0155	0.0159
Latvia	0.0103	0.0106
Slovenia	0.0090	0.0093
Estonia	0.0077	0.0079
Cyprus	0.0077	0.0079
Luxembourg	0.0077	0.0079
Malta	0.0064	0.0066

countries, which again constitutes an extension of the ‘one man one vote’ principle. Naturally, one could argue that the Parliament acts on the basis of party lines rather than national lines.

When using the Banzhaf Index similar results are obtained. One major difference, however, is that power shares of the bigger countries are lower when

measured with the Banzhaf Index, as opposed to the fact that power shares of smaller countries are higher. A good example for this is Germany, which has a power share of 0.0872 when measured with the Shapley-Shubik Index. When measured with the Banzhaf Index, Germany has a power share of 0.0778. Smaller countries' power shares are slightly higher when measured with the Banzhaf Index, as can be seen in the example of Hungary which has a power share of 0.034 when measured with the Shapley-Shubik Index, while its power share is 0.037 when the Banzhaf Index is used. This same trend can also be seen in the case of the EP, albeit in a less significant manner. The United Kingdom, for instance, has a power share of 0.0996 and 0.1013, when measured with the Banzhaf and Shapley-Shubik indices respectively. Overall, however, it should be noted that utilizing either the Shapley-Shubik or the Banzhaf indices does not create significant differences.

Application of Turkey

The Turkish case was not dealt with at the Nice Summit. Nonetheless, in order to envision EU enlargement in the long run, the inclusion of Turkey will give us a more complete picture since Turkey happens to be one of the official candidates. If and when admitted (let us say as the twenty-eighth member), Turkey would not change institutional balances drastically. Turkey's admission would, for instance, cause the power of the United Kingdom to decrease from 0.0872 to 0.0799 in the Council. Similarly Germany would lose about one per cent of its power share in the Council. Similar results do hold for the EP. Hypothetically, if Turkey were to be included in the Union today as the sixteenth member, it would alter power balances more sharply. In a Union of 27 members, however, Turkey's presence would not be felt as much in the sense that the Union would be much larger and, on its own, it would have very little power to initiate or block a decision the same as any other big country. However, one should not underestimate Turkey's potential impact on the institutional balances in the EU. Vote and seat shares of Turkey in the Council and in the Parliament would be equal or very close to that of Germany. Thus Turkey could be a significant ally for the big countries as well as the small ones, although one should not exaggerate its role as a single large country in altering all obtained balances.

Indeed, this brings us to the notion of alliances between members of the Union and their importance in terms of power distribution. In such large decision-making bodies where power distribution approaches the distribution of seats, further research may be conducted on possible coalitions and groupings within the Union and their potential effects on power distribution.

Appendix A: Populations of countries

Countries	Population (thousands of people)
Germany	83.029
Turkey	66.494
United Kingdom	59.648
France	59.551
Italy	57.680
Spain	40.038
Poland	38.634
Romania	22.364
Netherlands	15.981
Greece	10.624
Czech Republic	10.264
Belgium	10.259
Hungary	10.106
Portugal	10.066
Sweden	8.875
Austria	8.151
Bulgaria	7.707
Slovakia	5.415
Denmark	5.353
Finland	5.176
Ireland	3.841
Lithuania	3.611
Latvia	2.835
Slovenia	1.930
Estonia	1.423
Cyprus	0.763
Luxembourg	0.443
Malta	0.395

Source: US Bureau of Census, *International Database* (available online).

Appendix B: Current vote distribution

Member State	Votes in the Council	Seats in the EP
Germany	10	99
United Kingdom	10	87
France	10	87
Italy	10	87
Spain	8	64
Netherlands	5	31
Belgium	5	25
Greece	5	25
Portugal	5	25
Sweden	4	22
Austria	4	21
Finland	3	16
Denmark	3	16
Ireland	3	15
Luxembourg	2	6

Appendix C: Vote distribution in the case of enlargement

Countries	Votes in the Council	Seats in the EP
Germany	29	99
Turkey	29	77
United Kingdom	29	72
France	29	72
Italy	29	72
Spain	27	50
Poland	27	50
Romania	14	33
Netherlands	13	25
Greece	12	22
Czech Republic	12	20
Belgium	12	22
Hungary	12	20
Portugal	12	22
Sweden	10	18
Bulgaria	10	17
Austria	10	17
Slovakia	7	13
Denmark	7	13
Finland	7	13
Ireland	7	12
Lithuania	7	12
Latvia	4	8
Slovenia	4	7
Estonia	4	6
Cyprus	4	6
Luxembourg	4	6
Malta	3	5

Appendix D. Power distribution with Turkey

Countries	Shapley-Shubik Index		Banzhaf Index	
	In the Council	In the EP	In the Council	In the EP
Germany	0.0804	0.1307	0.0727	0.1300
Turkey	0.0804	0.0982	0.0727	0.0968
United Kingdom	0.0799	0.0911	0.0727	0.0899
France	0.0799	0.0911	0.0727	0.0899
Italy	0.0797	0.0911	0.0727	0.0899
Spain	0.0736	0.0614	0.0691	0.0611
Poland	0.0736	0.0614	0.0691	0.0611
Romania	0.0367	0.0397	0.0393	0.0398
Netherlands	0.0338	0.0298	0.0366	0.0301
Greece	0.0312	0.0261	0.0340	0.0265
Czech Republic	0.0312	0.0237	0.0340	0.0240
Belgium	0.0312	0.0261	0.0340	0.0265
Hungary	0.0312	0.0237	0.0340	0.0240
Portugal	0.0312	0.0261	0.0340	0.0265
Sweden	0.0259	0.0213	0.0285	0.0216
Bulgaria	0.0259	0.0201	0.0285	0.0204
Austria	0.0259	0.0201	0.0285	0.0204
Slovakia	0.0180	0.0153	0.0201	0.0156
Denmark	0.0180	0.0153	0.0201	0.0156
Finland	0.0180	0.0153	0.0201	0.0156
Ireland	0.0180	0.0141	0.0201	0.0144
Lithuania	0.0180	0.0141	0.0201	0.0144
Latvia	0.0102	0.0093	0.0116	0.0096
Slovenia	0.0102	0.0081	0.0116	0.0084
Estonia	0.0101	0.0070	0.0116	0.0072
Cyprus	0.0101	0.0070	0.0116	0.0072
Luxembourg	0.0101	0.0070	0.0116	0.0072
Malta	0.0077	0.0058	0.0086	0.0060

Notes

1. Indeed there are 13 official applicant states including Turkey. Turkey, however, is not taken into account in the debate concerning institutional reform.
2. See Shapley & Shubik (1954).

3. See Banzhaf (1965).
4. A coalition is a winning one if it has the necessary number of votes to pass or enforce a decision.
5. See Dowding (2000) for an overview and extensive discussion of the power index approach in institutionalist research on the EU.
6. The power of the collectivity to act described as the overall capacity and efficiency of the institution to reach a decision.
7. See Banzhaf (1965).
8. Also relevant in this context is Felsenthal & Machover (1998).
9. See Laruelle & Valenciano (2001).
10. See the Appendices for the adjusted votes of Member States and possible members in case of enlargement.

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