

Review of: "The EU's Capacity for Enlargement: Does It Matter?"

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The exploration of EU enlargement and its associated trade-offs presents a compelling and logically solid analysis. Against the backdrop of ongoing conflicts like the Russia-Ukraine war and the escalating US-China hegemony rivalry, there arises a pertinent question: Is EU enlargement with more member countries truly imperative in the era of Trump 2.0? Yet, in investigating the complexities of EU enlargement, we should consider important factors beyond the benefits from economies of scale and the costs related to the heterogeneity among member states. It's important to emphasize that in the aftermath of EU formation, particularly with the adoption of a single currency, we have witnessed a biased restructuring of production capacities among member countries, leading to a significant imbalance in economic growth and living standards. The distribution of benefits from the single market predominantly favors a select few countries, including Germany, leaving others marginalized. This unbalanced benefit sharing was partially compensated by the winner group through a relatively higher contribution to the provision of public goods, such as cost sharing for upgrading national security. Without addressing this fundamental issue of imbalance of economic benefit of the union, the incorporation of additional member states risks exacerbating the problem further. In essence, while EU enlargement may offer potential benefits, it is imperative to confront and rectify existing disparities in order to ensure a more equitable distribution of benefits from the single market among member states. Failure to do so could perpetuate and compound the existing challenges within the union. This issue should be additionally analyzed to improve the substance of the discussion.