

The European Union and NATO: Teleologically Convergent Security Communities, but with Cohesive Alterities in the Post-Cold War Era*

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Keywords: security communities, NATO, European Union, common norms, shared sociocultural values, internal cohesion

Abstract: *In this paper, we examine the degree of cohesion of the European Union (EU) and NATO in the context of the expansion of these two entities after the end of the Cold War. The research query aims at the extent to which the expansion process of the last three decades has impacted on the cohesion of the two organizations seen in their posture as security communities. Against this background, the objective of our analysis is to quantitatively quantify the internal homogeneity of the two organizations in terms of the propensity of the member states to adhere to the common framework of legal norms, socio-cultural values and civic-social parameters that the two communities claim as an existential foundation. For this purpose, we use a set of six representative indicators for the mentioned norms and values, respectively the rule of law index, regulatory quality index, control of corruption, voice and accountability, political rights, and civil liberties. The evaluation of the degree of cohesion of the two organizations is carried out based on the standard deviation values calculated for each of the six indicators for the reference interval 1996–2020. The results of the analysis highlight that, despite the declared common security goal of the two communities, their degree of internal cohesion, from the perspective of adherence to the shared values, is very different. Thus, after the successive waves of expansion, both organizations registered the progressive reduction of the basis of socio-cultural cohesion, diminishing their initial liberal-western essence. However, the EU remains more cohesive (and more conservative) from this point of view than NATO, which, despite its much more robust security capabilities, has a much lower base of sociocultural cohesion.*

Introduction

Born in the tumult of the beginning of the Cold War, the European Communities (EC) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) assumed from the start the role of instruments for ensuring the stability and security of the Western world. The material competences of the two

^{1*} An earlier version of this paper was presented at The 1st National Conference on Global History and International Relations: XX–XXI Centuries, Faculty of History, University of Bucharest, on December 6, 2024, in Romanian entitled: “Uniunea Europeană și NATO: comunități de securitate cu scop comun, dar coeziune diferențiată în epoca post-război rece” [“The European Union and NATO: security communities with a common purpose but with differentiated cohesion in the post-Cold War era”].

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organizations were different, but the final goal assumed the same primary thesis, namely ensuring the well-being in safe conditions of the collective West. The EC initially aimed to guarantee the balance on the European continent by placing heavy industry under common control in order to avoid a repetition of the dangerous context that led to the outbreak of World War II,² while NATO had to ensure the security of the Western space in the face of the Soviet threat.³ If NATO's security function has been preserved since its creation in 1949, the attributes, competences and management of the European organization have undergone successive structural and functional metamorphoses, especially accentuated with the operationalization of the European Union (EU) in 1993.

The functional consistency of NATO is explained both by the persistence of fear in the face of the common danger and especially by the much narrower range of assumed attributions, namely the collective defense function. In contrast, the EC and then the EU, having a much wider range of their own competencies, were forced to permanently remodel their organizational chart and valences, depending on the self-assumed objective of functional integration.⁴ But it was precisely the integrationist goal that generated numerous difficulties on the roadmap of the European agenda. The sharing of competences between the supranational level of the EU and the national levels had to be negotiated each time with great skill in order to manage the sensitivities of the member states regarding the transfer of some of the attributes of national sovereignty in different areas, seen as key ingredients in the configuration of national interests.⁵

In this problematic context, the establishment of NATO, based on the fear of the potential enemy and the consequent geopolitical imperatives, proved to be much more flexible compared to the efforts of socio-economic and socio-cultural integration within the EU structure. This phenomenon revealed new asperities in the context of the enlargement of the EU and NATO after the end of the Cold War. If in their initial organizational chart both organizations had a great

² Adrian Liviu Ivan, *Sub zodia Statelor Unite ale Europei. De la ideea europeană la Comunitățile Economice Europene* Cluj-Napoca, CA Publishing, 2009, pp. 126–127.

³ Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (New York: Penguin Press, 2005), 112; Pierre Milza, and Serge Bernstein, *Istoria secolului XX. Lumea între război și pace: 1945–1973*, București, All, 1998, p. 122.

⁴ Tanja A. Börzel, Antoaneta Dimitrova, Frank Schimmelfennig, "European Union enlargement and integration capacity: concepts, findings, and policy implications," *Journal of European Public Policy* 24, no. 2 2017, p. 158.

⁵ Iordan Gh. Bărbulescu, *Noua Europă. Identitate și model european*, Iași, Polirom, 2015, pp. 477–478.

internal cohesion based on a much more homogeneous set of shared socio-cultural values, the enlargement of the EU and NATO starting with the second half of the 1990s brought within the two organizations a series of states that, although formally meeting the required political and economic criteria, do not fully fit into the grid of Western civic-social and socio-cultural parameters. This suggests the emergence of a deficit in internal cohesion of the EU and NATO following the enlargement process, a context in which our study aims to establish what was the impact of the enlargement of the two bodies on their internal cohesion. To this end, we propose the sociometric quantification of the homogeneity of the two organizations after the successive enlargements in the last 30 years in terms of the affinity of the member states to the set of legal norms, sociocultural values and civic-social parameters that the two communities proclaim as a common structural vein.

The findings show a very solid common commitment of the two organizations only to the objective of common security, while following successive enlargements there has been a dilution of socio-cultural and civic-social cohesion for both the EU and NATO, but to a different extent between the two blocs. The decrease in civic-social homogeneity has experienced a more pronounced gradient within NATO compared to the EU, which remains more cohesive in terms of its attachment to liberal values.

The current analysis is structured in three successive panels, in which we explore the characteristics of the EU and NATO as pluralistic security communities (first section), explain the research methodology used (second section) and present the concrete picture of the sociocultural and civic-social alterities identified for the EU and NATO in the post-Cold War era (third section), followed by the panel of conclusive iterations.

1. EU and NATO – pluralistic security communities with common goals, but with different managerial patterns and competencies

The emergence of trust based on common liberal values crystallizes both the collective identity of NATO and the EU, as a matrix-framework of relations between the political entities (states) that are components of the North Atlantic Alliance and the EU.⁶ This component of mutual

⁶ Emanuel Adler, Michael Barnett, *Security Communities*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 41–42.

trust defines, within the margin of a sociocultural construct, the two organizations as pluralistic security communities made up of autonomous subjects, but linked by the cultural bond of shared values,⁷ on the basis of which they have built their common framework of security and well-being. This common security objective also represents the teleological dimension of the existence of the two Western communities, beyond which different competences, mechanisms and structures unfold.

For the North Atlantic Alliance, applying Adler and Barnett's definition of the security community, positions NATO as "a transnational region composed of sovereign states whose peoples maintain well-founded expectations of peaceful change."⁸ In this explanatory context, the North Atlantic Alliance remained definable even in the post-Cold War period, as a security community strongly connected internally by the bond of trust,⁹ in which the member states manage to overcome divergences such as those related to socio-cultural and civic-social issues, and even more than that, they manage to consolidate their Atlanticist identity emergence as a label associated with the Alliance's security community.

Similar defining features for a security community are also found in the case of the EU, derived from the spirit of the European treaties (EU Treaty and EU Functioning Treaty): the sharing by its members of identities, values and meanings, the multitude and variety of direct relationships, the attitude based on reciprocity with long-term interests derived from mutual knowledge and highlighting feelings such as that of duty and responsibility. It is precisely in this diffuse responsibility that the specific difference between community and a simple association, characterized only by immediate reciprocity, is found, the EU security community thus going beyond the framework of interstate interaction,¹⁰ despite the strong intergovernmental character that characterizes security approaches at the EU level. Practically, the EU meets the requirements of a security community as defined by Karl Deutsch in 1957, namely "a community founded on the trust existing between its members, excluding the possibility of violence between them and in

⁷ Radu-Sebastian Ungureanu, "Comunități de securitate," in *Manual de relații internaționale*, eds. Andrei Miroiu, and Radu-Sebastian Ungureanu, Iași, Polirom, 2006, p. 243.

⁸ Emanuel Adler, Michael Barnett, *Security Communities ...*, p. 30.

⁹ Somdeep Sen, "NATO and the global colour line," *International Affairs* 100, no. 2, 2024, p. 492.

¹⁰ Idem, *Securitate, suveranitate și instituții internaționale*, Iași, Polirom, 2010, p. 132.

which not the rationality of the actors/members is fundamental in its functioning, but an affect that characterizes the relations between political units."¹¹ This feature strengthens the common security action through the new coordinates offered by the Lisbon Treaty, which grants the EU legal personality (art. 47 of the EU Treaty) and therefore the possibility of the EU participating as an independent actor in armed operations, without the mediation of revoluted bodies, such as the Western European Union or the defunct European Defence Community. Such an approach is, however, difficult to process in the EU due to the codecision mechanism that requires unanimity of the members and makes common security approaches more difficult compared to approaches circumscribed to economic or social sectoral fields.

Unlike the weakness of the European Union's security and defense policies, which are more like "a catalog of discussions based on a rather weak legal and institutional framework,"¹² NATO's defense policy and planning constitute the heart of the Alliance's mission. However, there have also been sensitive moments on the Organization's roadmap, such as France's self-exclusion from the NATO Military Planning Committee between 1966–2009, Greece's withdrawal from NATO's integrated structures between 1974–1980 amid the Cyprus crisis of 1974, or the internal split in NATO (and the EU) in 2003 caused by the decision not to support the US intervention in Iraq adopted by several European NATO states. This was the most consistent internal crisis of confidence within the Alliance in its entire existence, when only a number of 11 European states (the so-called Vilnius Group) decided to unconditionally support the American initiative to intervene in Iraq.

Most of the Vilnius Group members were Eastern states that had recently joined or were in the process of joining NATO, which led Paul Wolfowitz (US Deputy Secretary of Defense at time) to proclaim the "New Europe" in reference to the new members that were much more pro-Atlantic compared to the "Old Europe" made up of older Western European

¹¹ Karl W. Deutsch, Sydney A. Burrell, Robert A. Kann, Maurice Lee Jr., Martin Lichterman, Raymond E. Lindgren, Francis L. Loewenheim, Richard W. van Wageningen, *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area. International Organization in the Light of Historical Experience*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957, pp. 5–6.

¹² Iordan Gh. Bărbulescu, *Noua Europă ...*, p. 474.

states that had shown skepticism towards the US intervention in Iraq without a UN mandate.¹³

These temporary divergences between NATO and the EU were caused by the very way the two bodies approached the security issue. If in the EU the common security and defence policy was gradually rolled out through the technique of small steps in a neo-functionalist understanding¹⁴ without ever achieving its full integration and institutionalisation in a feasible collective security matrix,¹⁵ in NATO the defence policy was from the very beginning proclaimed as the neo-realist foundation of the Alliance's creation, supported on the basis of gradually assumed trust and cooperation, in which each participant seeks to satisfy its own security interests through already established and tested mechanisms.¹⁶ In addition, the formation and functioning of NATO also benefited from the catalyst of the firm decision of the USA to expand the Alliance to the East after the end of the Cold War¹⁷ in accordance with the interests of the American strategy in Eurasia¹⁸ and to extend the US control in the Rimland.¹⁹ In this operational framework, the "globalization" of NATO had a much stronger impact than the "globalization" of the EU,²⁰ and the socio-cultural and

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 480.

¹⁴ Ernst B. Haas, *The Uniting of Europe: Political, Social and Economic Forces, 1950–1957*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1968, *passim*; Julian Bergmann, "Neofunctionalism and EU external policy integration: the case of capacity building in support of security and development (CBSD)," *Journal of European Public Policy* 26, no. 9, 2019, p. 1253.

¹⁵ Roger Bootle, *The Trouble with Europe*, London, Boston, Nicholas Brealey, 2016, pp. 132, 155; Christoff Hermann, "Neoliberalism in the EU," *Studies in Political Economy* 79, no. 1, 2007, pp. 62, 64; Sabine Saurugger, "The European Union and Federalism: possibilities and limits," in *Formes d'Europe. Forms of Europe*, eds. Gilles Grin, Françoise Nicod, Bernhard Altermatt, Paris, Economica, 2018, p. 177.

¹⁶ Radu-Sebastian Ungureanu, *Securitate, suveranitate și instituții ...*, p. 136.

¹⁷ Zbigniew Brzezinski, "NATO—Expand or Die," *New York Times*, December 28, 1994; James M. Goldgeier, "The US Decision to Enlarge NATO: How, When, Why, and What Next," *Brookings Review* 17, no. 3, 1999, p. 18; Maria Mälksoo, "NATO's new front: deterrence moves eastward," *International Affairs* 100, no. 2, 2024, p. 531.

¹⁸ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives*, New York, Basic Books, 1997, *passim*; Rajan Menon, William Ruger, "NATO enlargement and US grand strategy: a net assessment," *International Politics* 57, no. 3, 2020, pp. 371–372; Strobe Talbott, "Why NATO Should Grow," *New York Review of Books*, August 10, 1995.

¹⁹ Nicholas John Spykman, *The Geography of the Peace*, ed. Helen R. Nicholl, New York, Harcourt Brace & Co., 1944, *passim*.

²⁰ Ivo Daalder, James Goldgeier, "Global NATO," *Foreign Affairs* 85, no. 5, 2006, p. 109; Trine Flockhart, "NATO in the multi-order world," *International Affairs* 100, no. 2, 2024, p. 471; Somdeep Sen, "NATO and the global colour line," *International Affairs* 100, no. 2, 2024, p. 492; NATO, "Partners across the globe," https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_84336.htm#partnersglobe.

civic-social parameters inevitably took a back seat on the agenda of Washington's strategic opportunity assessments.

In the case of the EU, the last enlargement that did not disturb socio-cultural cohesion at the Union level was the one in 1995 when the three newly joined states (Austria, Finland and Sweden) were completely convergent with the civic-social parameters of the pre-existing community club (EU-12), so that the new EU-15 of 1995 can be considered the last landmark of socio-cultural cohesion of the EU.

The comparative transformations of the EU and NATO after 1995 highlight an increasingly neorealist dynamic of NATO in parallel with an increasingly neofunctionalist evolution of the EU on the socio-economic levels, but without being able to go beyond the intergovernmental stage on the security and common foreign policy levels.²¹ Against the backdrop of the general decadence of Eurocentrism in the post-war era,²² the EU became, especially after 1990, the model of civil power based on the superiority of its civic-social parameters and its sophisticated institutionalism,²³ but dependent in terms of security on the USA as the leading power²⁴ within a NATO less sensitive to socio-cultural values; in such a context, Turkey's accession to NATO since 1952 is explained, but its non-acceptance even today in the EU after three applications for accession since the 1960s.

Research to date emphasizes the consistent role of NATO and EU enlargement in stabilizing Europe and promoting liberal democracy in Central and Eastern Europe after 1990,²⁵ without attempting to quantitatively measure the normative, sociocultural, and civic-social cohesion of the two organizations, an aspect that we explore further.

2. Research methodology

²¹ Bastian Giegerich, William Wallace, "Foreign and Security Policy ... ," p. 454.

²² Alison Stone, "II – Europe and Eurocentrism," *Aristotelian Society Supplementary* 91, no. 1, 2017, p.83.

²³ Bastian Giegerich, William Wallace, "Foreign and Security Policy ... ," p. 435; Richard G. Witman, *From Civilian Power to Superpower? The International Identity of the European Union*, London, Macmillan, 1998, *passim*.

²⁴ Bastian Giegerich, William Wallace, "Foreign and Security Policy ... ," pp. 436–437; Ian Kershaw, *Un Continent Fracturat. Europa, 1950–2017*, București, Litera, 2019, pp. 153, 167.

²⁵ Tanja A. Börzel, Antoaneta Dimitrova, Frank Schimmelfennig, "European Union enlargement ... ," p. 157; John J. Mearsheimer, "Back to the future: instability in Europe after the Cold War," *International Security* 15, no. 1, 1990, pp. 48–49; Rajan Menon, William Ruger, "NATO enlargement ... ," p. 371.

In order to quantify the degree of sociocultural and civic-social cohesion of the EU and NATO after the end of the Cold War, we use a statistical-mathematical model based on calculating the standard deviation (SD) and the coefficient of variation (CV) of six representative indicators to illustrate the normative, sociocultural values and civic-social apprehensions in the EU and NATO member countries. Our analysis is a chrono-thematic assessment of the degree of normative and sociocultural homogeneity/cohesion of the two organizations in the period 1996–2020, carried out based on the following variables: Rule of Law Index, Regulatory Quality Index and Control of Corruption (as representative indicators for normative cohesion), respectively Voice and Accountability, Political Rights Index and Civil Liberties Index (as proxy variables for sociocultural and civic-social cohesion) (Table 1).

Table 1. Description of variables

Variable	Description
Rule of Law Index	It is an indicator that measures the state of the rule of law in every country in the world, annually. It is measured (points) on a scale between –2.5 (weak) and 2.5 (strong). Source: The World Bank, available at TheGlobalEconomy.com (https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/)
Regulatory Quality Index	This indicator measures the quality of legislation in every country in the world, annually. It is measured (points) on a scale between –2.5 (weak) and 2.5 (strong). Source: The World Bank, available at TheGlobalEconomy.com (https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/)
Control of Corruption	This parameter measures the level of corruption in every country in the world annually. It is measured (points) on a scale between –2.5 (weak) and 2.5 (strong). Source: The World Bank, available at TheGlobalEconomy.com (https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/)
Voice and Accountability	This variable quantifies the degree of civic responsibility and the availability of commitment to support civic-social causes in every country in the world, annually. It is measured (points) on a scale between –2.5 (weak) and 2.5 (strong).

Variable	Description
Political Rights Index	<p>Source: The World Bank, available at TheGlobalEconomy.com (https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/)</p> <p>It is an index that measures the observance of the political rights of citizens in every country in the world, annually. Measure: points on a scale between 7 (weak) and 1 (strong). Source: The Freedom House, available at TheGlobalEconomy.com (https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/)</p>
Civil Liberties Index	<p>This index expresses the degree of respect for civil liberties in every country in the world annually. Measure: points on a scale between 7 (weak) and 1 (strong). Source: The Freedom House, available at TheGlobalEconomy.com (https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/)</p>

Source: Author's concept

The data series of the six variables include the values corresponding to the moments of the enlargements in the period 1996–2020: 1996 (the moment following the enlargement to EU-15), 1999 (the first wave of NATO enlargement), 2004 (the second wave of NATO enlargement and the first wave of EU enlargement to the East), 2007 (the second wave of EU enlargement), 2013 (the third EU enlargement - Croatia and the NATO enlargements with Albania and Croatia in 2009) and 2020 (after the NATO enlargements with Montenegro - 2017 and North Macedonia - 2020).

The analysis of the spatio-temporal distribution of the six variables within the EU and NATO is carried out through two statistical-mathematical indicators:

- Standard Deviation (SD) – for calculating the degree of dispersion across states of the values of the six reference indicators;
- Coefficient of Variation (CV) – for measuring the degree of normative, socio-cultural and civic-social homogeneity/ cohesion of the EU and NATO in the analyzed interval.

The evaluation of the socio-cultural and civic-social cohesion of the EU and NATO is based on the SD and CV values: the lower values – the higher cohesion. We proceed both to the evaluation

of the dynamics of cohesion for each parameter, and to the comparative analysis between the EU and NATO at different reference points in the considered interval.

3. EU and NATO dynamics in the post-Cold War era: teleological cohesion, sociocultural heterogeneity

The dispersion of the values of the six variables within the EU and NATO expressed through SD reveals a “sprying” and polarization of the normative quality and the civic-social propensity within the EU and NATO together with the dynamics of the process of expansion towards the East of the two communities. The newly acceded states have induced significant increases in the SD values, against the background of the lower quality of the rule of law norms, of the legislation and of the control of corruption, but also against the background of a weaker propensity towards assuming civic responsibilities (Voice & Accountability) and ensuring civil and political rights.

Polarization is more pronounced in NATO than in the EU for all six parameters taken into account (Table 2). However, the differences are weaker for the rule of law, the regulatory quality and the control of corruption, because the severe requirements imposed for accession to the two organizations presuppose the prior adequate adaptation of the legal framework. In contrast, the otherness is great between the EU and NATO regarding the parameters related to socio-cultural and civic-social habitudes (Voice & Accountability, political rights and civil liberties); in the EU the polarization is less pronounced than in NATO, where geopolitical imperatives have determined the inclusion of countries of security interest for the Alliance, such as Turkey, Albania or North Macedonia, but which are not at all convergent from a civic-social point of view with Western states of liberal tradition.

Table 2. Standard Deviation (SD) of variables for the EU and NATO

Variable	Organizatio n	1996	1999	2004	2007	2013	2020
Rule of Law	EU	0.28	0.56	0.61	0.62	0.60	0.58
	NATO	0.46	0.60	0.63	0.64	0.68	0.70

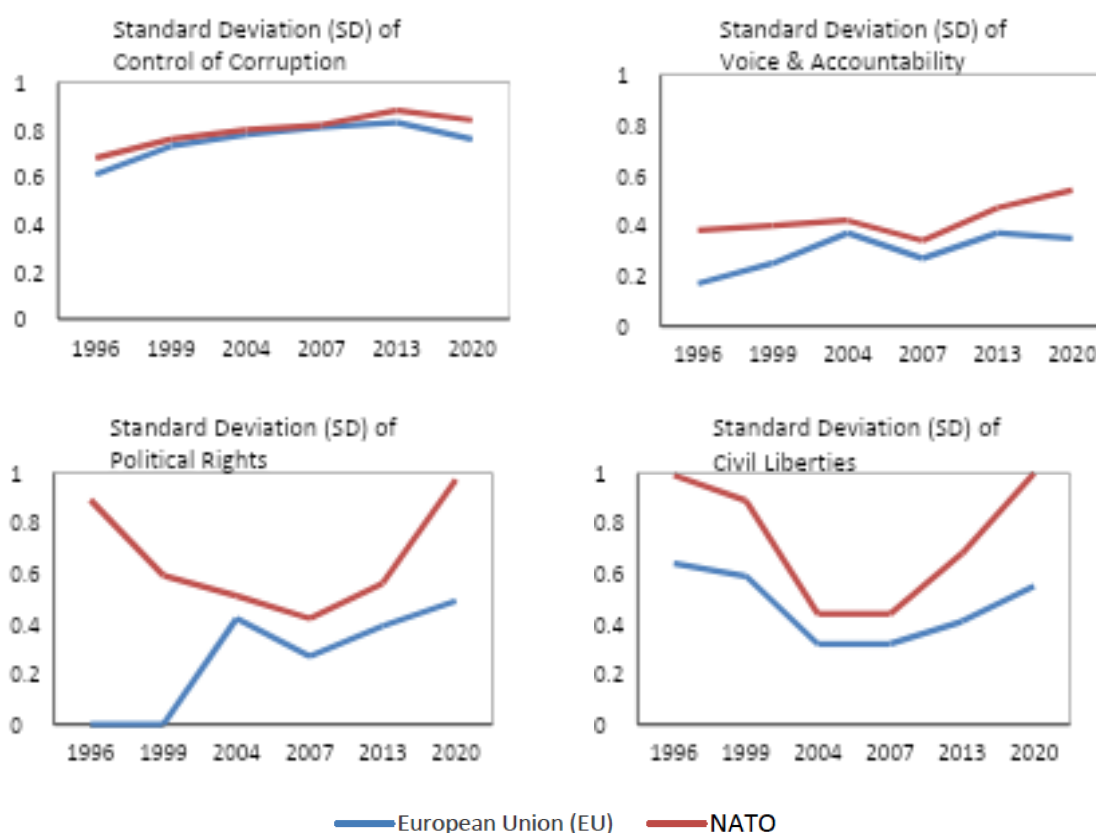
Regulatory Quality Index	EU	0.41	0.43	0.38	0.41	0.45	0.48
	NATO	0.45	0.44	0.42	0.42	0.47	0.53
Control of Corruption	EU	0.61	0.73	0.78	0.81	0.83	0.76
	NATO	0.68	0.76	0.80	0.82	0.88	0.84
Voice & Accountability	EU	0.17	0.25	0.37	0.27	0.37	0.35
	NATO	0.38	0.40	0.42	0.34	0.47	0.54
Political Rights	EU	0.00	0.00	0.42	0.27	0.39	0.49
	NATO	0.89	0.59	0.51	0.42	0.56	0.97
Civil Liberties	EU	0.64	0.59	0.32	0.32	0.41	0.55
	NATO	0.99	0.89	0.44	0.44	0.68	1.02

Source: Author's proceedings based on World Bank and Freedom House

The most striking discrepancies between the EU and NATO are those related to political rights and civil liberties (Fig. 1). A large difference is observed between the two bodies in terms of rights and freedoms over two distinct periods; until the start of the NATO enlargement waves from 1999–2004 when the discordant note was given by Turkey and then after the accessions of Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia from 2009–2020. Also, to assess the dispersion of the quality of civil rights and freedoms both within the EU and NATO, the illiberal developments after 2010 in a number of newly acceded states, such as Hungary, must be taken into account.

Fig. 1. Standard Deviation (SD) of variables for the European Union and NATO (1996–2020)





Source: Author's proceedings based on World Bank, and Freedom House

Normative, sociocultural and civic-social cohesion is expressed through CV values and is a consequence of the dispersion/polarization of the values of the analyzed parameters. The degree of normative and sociocultural cohesion/homogeneity has the advantage that it can be expressed much more precisely, based on precise value ranges,²⁶ therefore having a much greater sociometric relevance. According to the CV values (Table 3, Fig. 2), we observe that good civic-social cohesion was recorded only in the dimension of political rights in the EU-15, that is, until the start of the massive enlargement to the East in 2004. Relative normative cohesion was also recorded in the EU-15 until 1999, and moderate socio-cultural cohesion (Voice & Accountability) took place in the EU until 2012–2013. In the segment of civic-social cohesion (rights and liberties), the EU marked a period of relative homogeneity in the years 2004–2007. Within NATO, there were only two short intervals of moderate socio-cultural cohesion until the 1999 enlargement wave and respectively

²⁶ Erich L. Lehmann, *Testing Statistical Hypothesis*, 2nd edition, New York, Wiley, 1986, p. 64.

between 2007–2009, that is, until the accession of Albania and Croatia; outside of these short periods, NATO has consistently registered a deficit of normative, sociocultural and civic-social cohesion.

In practice, both the EU and NATO manage to ensure their common objective of long-term security and welfare, despite the fact that they are experiencing a chronic deficit of normative, socio-cultural and civic-social cohesion following successive waves of enlargement.

Table 3. Coefficients of Variation (CV) of variables for EU and NATO

Variable	Organization	1996	1999	2004	2007	2013	2020
Rule of Law	EU	0.18	0.45	0.56	0.53	0.54	0.55
	NATO	0.31	0.48	0.55	0.53	0.61	0.72
Regulatory Quality Index	EU	0.29	0.35	0.31	0.32	0.39	0.42
	NATO	0.33	0.36	0.34	0.33	0.41	0.50
Control of Corruption	EU	0.38	0.56	0.72	0.75	0.83	0.77
	NATO	0.44	0.57	0.70	0.71	0.87	0.93
Voice & Accountability	EU	0.12	0.20	0.29	0.23	0.34	0.33
	NATO	0.28	0.33	0.33	0.29	0.44	0.56
Political Rights	EU	0.00	0.00	0.37	0.25	0.33	0.40
	NATO	0.74	0.52	0.44	0.37	0.44	0.64
Civil Liberties	EU	0.41	0.36	0.28	0.28	0.33	0.40
	NATO	0.61	0.54	0.38	0.38	0.51	0.64
Average	EU	0.23	0.32	0.42	0.39	0.46	0.47
	NATO	0.45	0.46	0.45	0.43	0.54	0.66

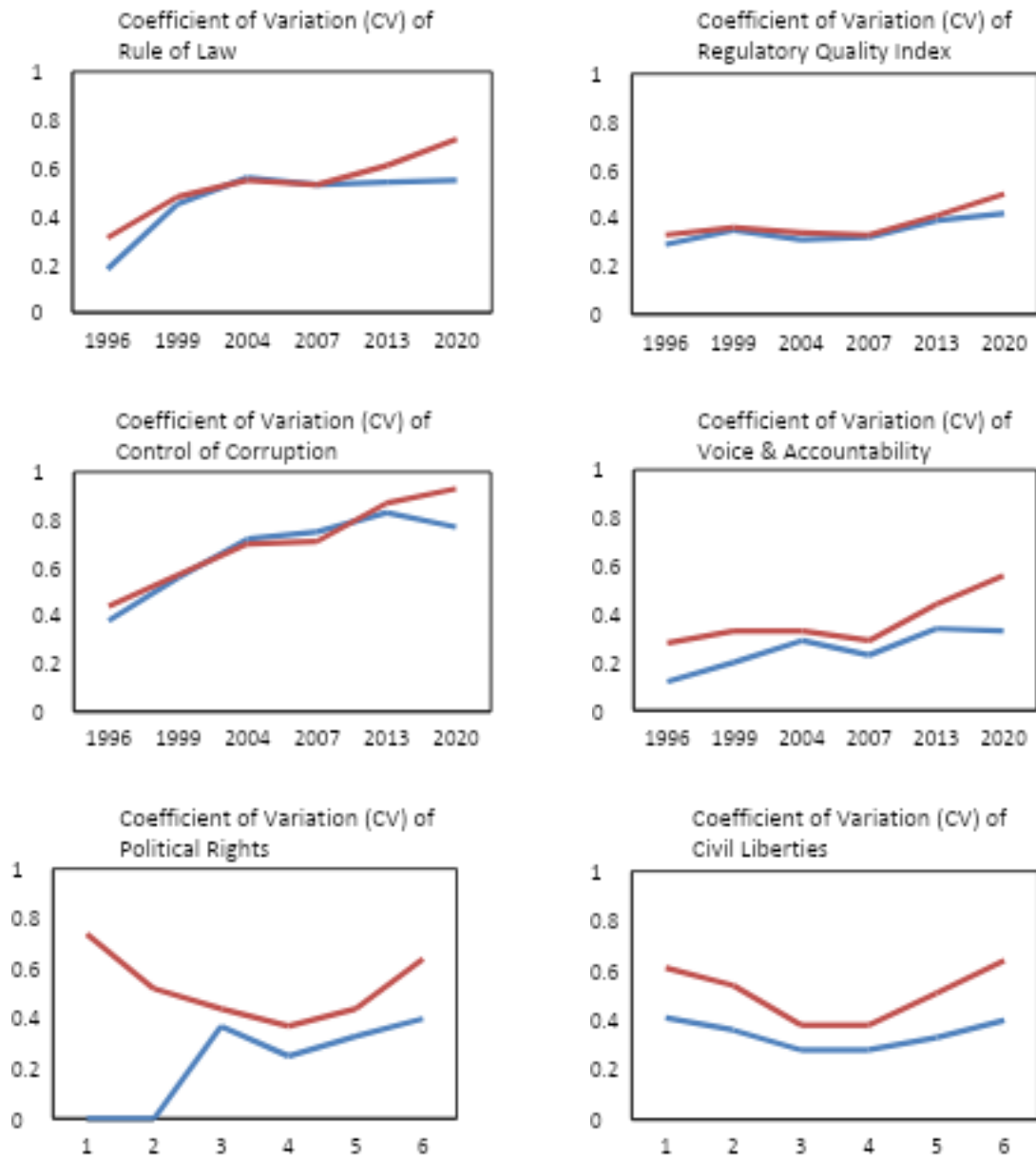
■ homogeneity ($CV \leq 0.10$ - high cohesion)

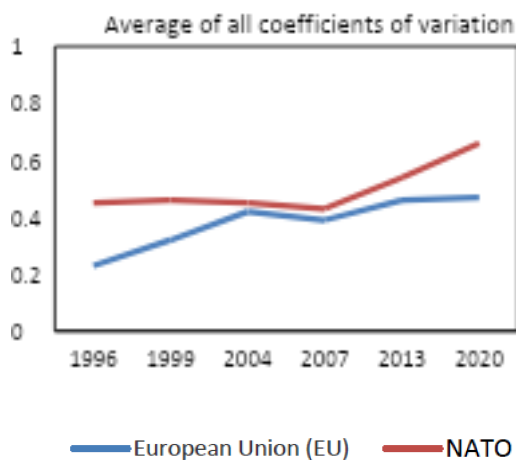
■ relative homogeneity ($0.10 < CV \leq 0.30$ - medium cohesion)

■ heterogeneous ($0.30 < CV$ - low cohesion) Ranges of CV values, according to Lehmann, 1986

Source: Author's proceedings based on World Bank, and Freedom House

Fig. 2. Coefficients of Variation (CV) of variables for EU and NATO (1996–2020)





Source: Author's proceedings based on World Bank and the Freedom House

The CV values attest that the normative cohesion of the EU and NATO was almost similar throughout the investigated period, while the socio-cultural and civic-social cohesion of the EU consistently outperformed that of NATO. As an effect of the spatial polarization of the normative quality and the civic-social vocation, the most relevant alterities between the EU and NATO (in favor of the EU) were recorded at the levels of social responsibilities (Voice & Accountability) and of political rights and civil liberties, so that NATO appears as a more socio-culturally heterogeneous but more security-pragmatic security community, while the EU can be defined as a more socio-culturally cohesive security community but with a less coherent collective security management.

Conclusive interpretations

The EU and NATO represent security communities with differentiated normative, socio-cultural and civic-social cohesion. The differences in cohesion/homogeneity have been accentuated after the successive waves of enlargement in the last three decades, as a result of which the EU nevertheless appears more cohesive than NATO in terms of the common values that both organizations claim as an existential foundation. The most striking otherness is in terms of socio-cultural and civic-social indicators (degree of civic responsibility, political rights and civil liberties), but more attenuated in terms of normative indicators (rule of law, regulatory quality), so

that the socio-cultural cohesion of the EU clearly outperforms the similar cohesion of NATO, while the normative cohesion of those organizations is closer.

From this point of view, the EU presents itself as a constructivist, neofunctionalist and partially neoliberal security community, while NATO is a neorealist and rationalist security community. The explanation for this disjunctive evolution lies in the fact that the EU's security dimension was built predominantly in dependence on NATO and less in the margin of the neofunctionalist spill-over generated by the other sectoral areas of community integration, while NATO was deliberately and exclusively built to ensure the security interest of its members over their socio-cultural propensities. Such a conjuncture makes the socio-cultural and civic-social terms subordinate to the pragmatic-realist ones in the case of NATO, but they have a greater significance within the EU, even if they fail to generate a robust package of common defense and security policies. This state of affairs raises additional questions regarding the potential impact of sociocultural factors on the development of collective security policies in the EU, a dimension that opens up an opportune perspective for deepening a future line of investigation.

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