

# Understanding EU-NATO Cooperation: How Member States Matter

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*“Understanding EU-NATO Cooperation: How Member States Matter”* by Nele Marianne Ewers-Peters conducts a distinctly member-state based theoretical examination of interorganizational cooperation between the EU and NATO. Ewers-Peters mainly intends to demonstrate member states’ foreign/security policy orientations, roles and positions affecting the functionality and dys-functionality of Euro-Atlantic security, between the period of the end of the Cold War and 2021. The book is composed of seven chapters including conclusion and implications. By providing 28 face-to-face semi-structured interviews carried out in Berlin and Brussels between February 2017 and February 2018, with different member states’ representatives (see Appendix A.), as well as document analysis of primary and secondary sources, the book relies on well-designed qualitative research.

In the Introduction, Ewers-Peters evaluates key concepts from relevant theories in the literature: network theory, international regime complexity and interorganizationalism. She argues that the theoretical approaches in general seek to explain cooperation through a set of agreed rules, norms, values, practices and procedures. She considers the most important features of interorganizational interaction to be density of network, functional overlap, level of formalization, frequency of interactions, intensity of interactions, and membership overlap. Thus, in Chapter 2, Ewers-Peters’ purpose is to embed the phenomenon of interorganizational interaction into Christer Jönsson’s<sup>1</sup> interorganizational theory (p.38), by borrowing Howard Loewen’s<sup>2</sup> and Stefan Jungcurt’s<sup>3</sup> term of “interplay between international institutions”.

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1 See, in detail, Christer Jönsson, “Interorganization Theory and International Organization”, *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No 1, 1986, p. 39-57.

2 See, Howard Loewen, “Towards a Dynamic Model of the Interplay Between Interantional Institutions”, *German Institute of Global and Area Studies*, Working Papers No 17, 2006.

3 Stefan Jungcurt and Thomas Meyer, “Consolidation, Delimitation and Stalemat: Disruptive Interplay and Strategic Incentives in the CBD-TRIPS Relationship”, Paper presented at the *Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis*, Indiana University, 11 September 2006.

According to Peters; in an effective interplay, organizations need to possess homogeneity of interests, and a high degree of functional overlap. Functional overlap is referred to as the “overlap of regulatory jurisdiction, tasks, geographical scope and membership, but can furthermore include, for example, geography, membership, responsibilities and organisational structures”.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, interorganizational division of labor, defined as the set of rules, tasks and responsibilities of competing organizations, determines the extent of the level at which functional overlap is recorded. Throughout the book, Ewers-Peters carefully analyzes how overlaps translate into either cooperation or competition. She presents an in-depth discussion of the features both within the bureaucratic and the inter-secretariat levels, beyond the most often called three levels of analysis (the system, the state, and the individual), and sets forth member states’ motivations to play the central role by opting for a range of political strategies, from brokering to forum-shopping and hostage-taking, in the decision-making process. In this respect, Ewers-Peters aims to embed this analysis in a new four-fold (advocates, blockers, balancers and neutrals) conceptualization of membership. Lastly, states’ ‘schizophrenic’ behavior in some cases (p.21), when a member state expresses contrary views on the same issue in the two separate situations of organizational ground and ‘swing states’,<sup>5</sup> the borderline cases that adopt and fulfil characteristics of more than one type of categorization are well described.

Chapter 3 focuses on the advocates, the United Kingdom (UK), the United States (US), Canada, Norway, the Benelux countries (Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg), the Baltics (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania) and Central and Eastern European States (Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia). The author argues that multiple membership mainly enables them to set up networks through functional overlap, and act in a united way, by implementing trade-offs and conditionality tools. Ewers-Peters also asserts that the advocates are distinct from each other in terms of their military resources (such as the nuclear arms of both the UK and the US), vulnerabilities and defence budgets, by providing a useful data for their defence expenditure as a share of GDP (p. 77). The cooperative developments for the autonomous European military capabilities subsequent to the 1998 Franco-British Summit in Saint- Malo, and the US’s altered position on European security, are also well analyzed within the chapter.

Chapter 4 examines the blockers, France, Cyprus, Greece, Ireland, and Turkey. The author exemplifies the political blockages enacted by the blockers, and analyzes how they inhibit closer cooperation in their national interest. The author also gives details of their possession of vital and inevitable military capabilities, according to their geographical position. Whether they are original members or single and subsequent member states, they push for their objectives and use their veto right, to prevent deeper interaction and cooperation. The book provides a concise description of the Cyprus issue, which made for the cooperation encompassed in the double veto of Turkey and Cyprus. However, Ewers-Peters also subsequently reveals how France’s

4 See, Thomas Gehring and Sebastian Oberthür, “The Casual Mechanisms of Interaction Between International Institutions”, *Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 15, No 1, 2009, p. 125-156.

5 Annemarie Peen Rodt, “Member States Policy Towards EU Military Operations”, in Hadfield, Amelia et al. (eds.) *Foreign Policy of EU Member States: Continuity and Europeanisation*, Abingdon, Routledge, p. 131-147.

support for EU-led missions and operations compared to NATO operations, and how Greece's participation in Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and NATO operations serves as a specific national objective. Thus, the book is applicable by reflecting the perspectives of other member states' strains on closer cooperation, despite the Cyprus issue often having been acknowledged as an alibi for the deep stalemate.

In Chapter 5, Germany, Italy, Portugal and Spain are examined, as balancers. Their own foreign and security policies, their shared pasts regarding their transition to liberal democracies, and their dependency on functioning multilateral frameworks, such as the EU and NATO, are well described as determinant factors, to find common grounds to achieve a division of labor between the EU and NATO. Peters provides details as to how balancers utilize each organization's key strengths and comparative advantages to overcome conflicts, such as support for the EU to conduct civilian missions in the Western Balkans and the Horn of Africa. The chapter also pays greater attention to Germany's strategic use of its specific assets, and ability to negotiate with some of the more powerful states, as well as the country's embeddedness in unilateral and bilateral relationships that ensures smaller states are drafted into cooperation.

In Chapter 6, Ewers-Peters examines Austria, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Iceland, and Malta the neutrals. In this chapter, she demonstrates their profiles as having limited military capabilities, and preference for the civilian dimension. The book also presents the argument that neutrals differ from each other, whether they are militarily neutral or have the non-alignment status, while some neutrals such as Austria and Malta have constitutional constraints to be aligned with one camp. She also refers to niche capabilities developed by the neutrals over time, such as the focus on maritime security in Malta, and Finland and Sweden's civilian mechanisms. Lastly, the chapter critically explores Denmark's special position as a borderline case, by being a close ally of the US, and UK, and its CSDP opt-out, and Iceland's situation of non-existent armed forces.

The author, in the last chapter of the book, argues that Sweden and Finland keep their options open to join NATO, and therefore anticipates their attempt to apply to join NATO following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. With its conceptualisation, she also paves the way to accounting for Turkey's attitude to end its opposition to their NATO membership, in exchange for particular counter-terrorism promises. Nonetheless, a drawback of the book is the aspect of not paying any attention to some countries, such as Serbia, which pursues EU membership, but does not aspire to join to NATO, although finding a joint approach to solve the Balkan conflicts is pointed out as the main driver of the Euro-Atlantic community's engagement in the late 1990s. Peters' analysis of NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) and the EU's Framework Participation Agreement (FPAs) could have been enhanced in this respect.

As an overall evaluation, Ewers-Peters' conclusions and arguments on states' behaviors, attitudes and approaches, answer the question as to why the cooperation between the EU and NATO still remains obscure to some extent in the literature.