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## NATO I EU U VOJNOM UPRAVLJANJU KRIZAMA: KOMPLEMENTARNOST ILI SUPARNIŠTVO?

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### Sažetak

U ovom članku autorice istražuju odnos između EU i NATO-a kao dva ključna aktera europske sigurnosne arhitekture. Kakva je priroda tog odnosa i koje su posljedice tog odnosa za sigurnosno okruženje? Da li ovaj odnos odlikuje komplementarnost ili suparništvo? U cilju odgovora na ova pitanja autorice će se usredotočiti na koncept institucionalnog izomorfizma kao korisnog analitičkog alata koji može osvijetliti dinamiku odnosa između NATO-a i zajedničke sigurnosne i obrambene politike EU (ZSOP). U radu će se najprije ukazati na osnove sociološkog institucionalizma koji se temelji na sličnosti i homogenizaciji organizacijskih područja koja su dio istog organizacijskog prostora, a zatim će se analizirati odnos sigurnosne i obrambene politike EU i NATO-a pomoću koncepta izomorfizma. Zaključuje se da je u početku postojala organizacijska sličnost između sigurnosne i obrambene politike EU i NATO-a, ali je s vremenom taj odnos doveo do natjecanja i preklapanja između dvije organizacije, te da evolucija odnosa između EU i NATO-a od suradnje ka suparništvu ima posljedice po sigurnosno okruženje i efikasnost vojnog kriznog upravljanja.

**Ključne riječi:** NATO, EU, institucionalni izomorfizam, komplementarnost, suparništvo

## **INTRODUCTION**

The European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) are two key actors of European security architecture. What is the nature of their relationship? Is this relationship characterized by complementarity or rivalry? In the last decade, many important studies provide fruitful insights into the general nature of the relationship between the EU and NATO in terms of prospects for cooperation and competition between both organizations. However, there has been paid little attention to the question why the Common Security and Defence Policy of the EU (CSDP) has taken that specific form and what is the dynamics of its institutional organization. The ambition of this paper is to explore the EU-NATO relationship by using the concept of similarity and homogenization of organizational fields that are part of the same organizational space. In this regard, particular importance is accorded to the concept of institutional isomorphism which follows the tradition of sociological institutionalism and provides the conceptual tools to describe and understand the particular dynamics of interinstitutional relations. In the first section, the authors will focus on the basics of sociological institutionalism and on the concept of institutional isomorphism. In the following section, the authors will explain the CSDP-NATO relationship by applying the concept of isomorphism. The authors conclude that, at first, through institutional isomorphism, the CSDP became increasingly similar to NATO. With time, however, increasing similarity leads to a competition and rivalry between two organizations as a consequence of adaptation to the security environmental demands.

## **SOCIOLOGICAL INSTITUTIONALISM AND ISOMORPHIC CHANGE**

Institutionalism is a theoretical approach which examines the nature, social origins and internal structure of institutions (Matić, 2010: 50). According to institutionalists, an institution is not necessarily a formal structure but also is a collection of norms, rules, understandings, and routines (Peters, 1999: 28). The new approaches of institutionalism insist on the autonomy of the institutions. Institutions are endogenous structures, i.e. they are not an expression of relationship established in the social structure, but possess the autonomy and also can change (Pavlović, 2009: 239). March and Olsen point out that "the claim of autonomy is necessary to establish that political institutions are more than simple mirrors of social forces" (March and Olsen, 1984: 739). In this regard, institutions are independent variables that affect actors, and the actors' behavior is seen as a result of institutional impact rather than as a reflection of social forces.

Three general types of the new institutionalism can be identified: historical institutionalism, rational choice institutionalism and sociological institutionalism. Rational choice institutionalism sees institutions as a system of rules rationally constructed by individuals, who seek to maximize their interests. Institutions are created in order to facilitate cooperation and solve collective action problems. Although the primary motivation of individuals remains utility maximization, the individuals realize that their goals can be achieved most effectively through institutional action (Peters, 1999: 44). Historical institutionalism fits in between rational choice institutionalism and sociological institutionalism. It is based on the concept of "limited rationality", e.g. it focuses on the role that institutions play in pushing historical development down certain paths, arguing that institutions are both formal structures and informal rules that guide the behavior (Miller and Holl, 2005: 194). Institutions are expected to exercise strong effects on individual behavior and therefore this approach emphasize the

importance of description of the formal structures and informal rules that constitute institutional forms.

The basics of the sociological institutionalism can be found in organization theory. According to this theory, institutional forms and procedures within the organizations are adopted in order to achieve the efficiency of organizations, according to strictly rational logic. Unlike this theory, the sociological institutionalism emphasizes that institutional forms and procedures should be seen as culturally-specific practices which are assimilated into organizations not necessarily to enhance their efficiency, but as a result of processes associated with the transmission of cultural practices (Hall and Taylor, 1996: 946). In this regard, sociological institutionalism understands institutions in a broad manner, perceiving them not only as formal rules, norms or procedures, but also as "the system of symbols, cognitive scripts and moral templates that provide the frames of meaning guiding human action" (Hall and Taylor, 1996: 947). Culture is one of the most important driving forces behind the institutionalization of human behaviour, because it contains the fundamental cognitive similarities that cause people to share perceptions of the world around them (Aspinwall and Schneider, 2000: 8). Hence, in sociological perspective, actions can only be explained and understood in relation to the cognitive and culturally informed institutions in the environmental space in which they exist (Aspinwall and Schneider, 2000: 9).

Sociological institutionalism tends to identify how institutional practices originate and change (Hall and Taylor, 1996: 949). Hence, this approach focuses on the reasons for change in the cognitive and normative scripts which are present in the institutional environment. According to this approach, organizations often adopt a new institutional practice not in order to fit particular requirements or tasks, but in order to enhance legitimacy rather than to improve performance (Juncos, 2011: 87). Hence, legitimacy is important concept in sociological institutionalism, because it helps to explain similarities in organizational forms (Aspinwall and Schneider, 2000: 9).

How organizations adapt to their environment? Why some organizations look similar, especially when they are tied together with relations of interdependence? A convincing answer to this question can be found in the work of DiMaggio and Powell. They consider that organizational fields tend to become increasingly similar over time thanks to four processes: increased interaction among organizations in the field, emergence of dominant organizations and of patterns of coalition between organizations, development of a mutual awareness among the participants involved in the field, and organizations face an increasing flow of information to processed (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983: 148). These authors seek to explain the similarity and homogeneity between organizations by using the concept of institutional isomorphism<sup>1</sup> which follows the tradition of sociological institutionalism and provides the conceptual tools to describe and understand the particular dynamics of interinstitutional relations. Like sociological institutionalism, this theory presumes that the structural change in organizations are less driven by competition or by the need for efficiency (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983: 147). The organizational changes in the same institutional environment lead to the similarity between organizations without necessarily making them more efficient. In this regard, the institutional isomorphism is viewed as "a constraining process that forces one unit in a population to resemble other units that face the same set of environmental conditions" (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983: 149). The key element of this process is legitimacy, which explains "why organizations

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<sup>1</sup> There are two types of isomorphism: competitive and institutional. Competitive isomorphism involves pressures towards similarity resulting from market competition, while institutional isomorphism includes organizational competition for political and institutional legitimacy as well as market position (Mizruchi and Fein, 1999: 656-7).

seek to be isomorphic in their structure and activity pattern with specific patterns present in their environment" (Radaelli, 2000: 27). There are three types of isomorphism: coercive, mimetic and normative (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983: 150). Coercive isomorphism concerns both formal and informal pressures exerted on one organization by other organization. In this scenario, powerful organizations impose rules and standards on other organizations. This type of isomorphism is grounded on power, i.e. the powerful external actor who is able to enforce the new institutional design. As a result, this model will be perceived as appropriate by another organization. In this perspective, the power has been discussed as a homogenizing force. Mimetic isomorphism occurs when the environment creates the uncertainty, and then organizations may model themselves on other organizations (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983: 151). This type of isomorphism is a form of imitation which is motivated by disorientation rather than by conviction that the model to be imitated is superior (Beckert, 2010: 158). In this scenario, the imitation of models may not assure efficiency, but is effective in generating legitimacy (Radaelli, 2000: 28). Finally, normative isomorphism is a result of professionalization of organizational field involving two processes: first, members of professions receive similar training, which socializes them into similar worldviews and second, members of professions interact through professional and trade associations, which further diffuses ideas among them (Mizruchi and Fein, 1999: 657).

The three above mentioned types of isomorphic pressures are mechanisms through which environmental demands cause organizational changes and lead to organizational homogeneity. They can act separately from each other, because they have their own logic. However, they all make organizations conform to expectations of their environment. The environmental expectations tend to be similar for all organizations that belong to the same organizational field. Conceived as systems of various component structures, organizations are similar because they adopt structural components from their peers in order to conform better to demands in their environment (Kourtikakis, 2010: 31). Hence, isomorphic pressures cannot explain similarities between organizations which are independent of each other, i.e. which are not part of the same organizational field.

## **EU, NATO AND ISOMORPHIC CHANGE**

How the process of isomorphism fits into the relationship between NATO and the EU? As mentioned before, the European security architecture as an organizational field can emerge thanks to increased interaction among organizations in the field, emergence of dominant organizations and of patterns of coalition between organizations, an increasing flow of information between organizations and the development of a mutual awareness among the participants involved in the field (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983: 148). During the Cold War, EC and NATO had separate mandates and responsibilities. NATO was a defensive alliance in charge of ensuring the security of Western transatlantic allies through collective security mechanism. The defence domain was absent from the European integration process after the European Defence Community project was rejected. The Cold War situation and the absence of contact between EC and NATO prevented the structuration of the EC security architecture as an organizational field. Both organizations evolved in different environment and had dissimilar domain. Hence, there was no similarity between these two organizations.

After the End of Cold War, the European Union and NATO are searching for the new role in response to the new demands of the international environment. The clear organizational division of labour, roles and functions that have characterized the NATO/EC relations throughout the Cold War were blurred. NATO briefly succeeded in establishing its primacy as

a military actor, while the transformation of the EC to the EU was accompanied by the creation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the EU (CFSP) as a first indication of the EU's readiness to venture into what had hitherto been NATO's exclusive domain (Varwick and Koops, 2009: 103). The European security architecture as an organizational field began to emerge. NATO and the EU developed an increased interaction in this field, with the domination of NATO, increasing flow of information between organizations and a mutual awareness among participants in the European security field. As a consequence, the process of development of the CSDP was characterised by the significant influence of NATO. As a primary security institution in Europe NATO pressured CSDP to copy its structures in order to secure its political influence and legitimacy. Apart from this example of coercive isomorphism, there was also at the same time uncertainty about the direction of the development of ESDP/CSDP, its goals, institutional forms and capacities. In this situation of uncertainty, mimetic isomorphism occurred. NATO has been perceived by the EU as a legitimate and successful military organization. Therefore, at the initial stage, CSDP created institutional bodies that were the imitation of the principal NATO institutional bodies. The EU Political and Security Committee resembled to the NATO North Atlantic Council, the EU Military Committee to the NATO Military Committee and the EU Military Staff to the NATO International Military Staff. As some authors point out, NATO was the template behind the creation of EU political-military bodies (Mérand, 2012: 146). Normative isomorphism was also visible in the creation of the CSDP. Namely, normative isomorphism describes the process of organizations becoming similar as a result of expectations and prescriptions from a majority of professionals in a given field (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983: 152). Hence, common standards and values within the EU were applied according to the NATO standards and operational experiences (Koops, 2012: 160). Cognitive dimension of NATO's impact was present even before the creation of the ESDP. NATO laid ground for a European military culture and shared norms for multinational cooperation which have a strong influence on the thinking and adoption of standards at EU level (Koops, 2012: 160). In this situation, increased domain similarity between EU and NATO occurred. NATO maintained its position as the main security provider in Europe and the EU took NATO as a model to develop its own vision of crisis management. There was both material and ideational dimension of dependence of the EU from NATO. The conclusion of Berlin plus agreements, which enabled EU to use NATO operational assets in the EU- led operations within the framework of the CSDP, was conceived as a reflection of the similarity and proximity between two organizations (Howorth, 2009: 97-8). These arrangements were put in practice in the Western Balkans with the launching of the EU military missions Concordia and EUFOR Althea. These missions were a result of isomorphic pressures. Concordia was the imitation of the NATO mission Allied Harmony and it was realized according to the NATO standards and operational experiences. The process of isomorphism was also visible in the case of the second mission EUFOR Althea. This EU's takeover of NATO SFOR mission consisted mostly of the same forces, the EU modelled its rules of engagement and operation plan to NATO, and the EU completely depended on NATO in terms of human, logistic, planning resources and in terms of legitimacy.

As mentioned above, the development of the CSDP was based on the imitation of NATO structures which was perceived to be a legitimate way to institutionalize CSDP. NATO was perceived as a dominant security actor in the European security architecture. However, homogeneity of structures between NATO and EU eroded during the time over the process of CSDP's maturation. From 2004 onwards the EU-NATO relation became less and less organizational similar, and their cooperation leads more and more to rivalry. How to explain this change in EU-NATO relation from isomorphic perspective?

For the organizations that are in the same organizational field, it is not necessarily to be identical. Structural variation among organizations in the same organizational field are persistent. DiMaggio and Powell point out that there may be competing conceptions as to how a particular environment is to be appropriately structured (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). Hence, organizations deviate more or less from institutional norms, otherwise they would be frozen in time. So, even in the most institutionalized field, there has to be some diversity in organizational forms in order to change to occur (Kondra and Hinings, 1998: 750).

The changing nature of EU-NATO relation can be explained by the process of autonomization of the EU in order to response to the changing demands of the organizational environment. In that regard, the strong similarity between the EU and NATO in institutional and operational domains eroded and the EU sought to differentiate itself in the identity domain (Koops, 2012). Thus, the EU becomes an example of the needed diversity in organizational forms even in the most institutionalized fields. Therefore, after launching the operation Artemis in Congo as a first autonomous EU operation implemented without using NATO facilities, the EU launched further autonomous operations in Africa involving direct or indirect cooperation with the UN. The UN gradually became the principal cooperation and legitimating partner for the EU. In this regard, the Battlegroups concept was introduced with the aim to strengthen the EU credibility and legitimacy through the cooperation with the UN. The initially strong institutional isomorphism with NATO has lost importance. NATO was no longer perceived as the dominant partner, the enabler and resource provider for the EU. In the institutional domain, the EU created an EU cell that was established within NATO SHAPE and a civil-military cell within the EU military staff for planning of EU civil-military missions. In addition, the EU Operation Centre was activated in 2007 with the objective not only to integrate military aspects into civilian missions but also to develop autonomous EU military capacities (Koops, 2012: 175). The growing European autonomy in the defence domain leads to the emergence of a distinctive EU culture in crisis management operations. By combining civilian and military missions in order to enhance its legitimacy and to put forward its uniqueness, the EU developed a distinctive approach to crisis management. Hence, the shift from institutional isomorphism to EU autonomisation from the NATO leads to the competition and rivalry between two organizations. This rivalry was particularly obvious in the case of the separate missions in the Horn of Africa, followed by the lack of formal cooperation between two organizations.

The EU-NATO relation cannot be regarded as static. Organizational environment is characterised by the elaboration of rules and requirements to which individual organizations must conform if they are to receive support and legitimacy (Kondra and Hinings, 1998: 744). Given that NATO and EU have been influenced by the same structural conditions, it is expected that many of the processes of development have followed similar patterns (Flockhart, 2011: 278). At first, NATO has been structured as primarily a military actor, while the EU has been structured as a soft and normative power. New demands of external environment lead to the changes of the EU and NATO. The EU response to the environmental demands has been more successful than NATO response, despite the fact that NATO's actions are far more demanding in terms of size, scope and complexity. The EU became the security actor with high level of legitimacy and unique mix of military and civilian means in crisis management approach. In comparison to NATO, the EU seems to be able to gain more legitimacy despite the modest achievement of the large number of operations and their wide geographical spread. Unlike the EU, NATO was not able to respond successfully to the demands of external environment. Its primary military role as a military alliance was frozen in time thus enabling it to gain legitimacy. However, this gap between EU and NATO which leads to the rivalry between them could be regarded as temporary. The mechanisms of isomorphism can under different conditions lead to

institutional divergence (Beckert, 2010: 152). That means that the isomorphic pressures will continue to persist. Organizations are similar because they adopt structural components from their peers in order to conform better to demands in their environment. Hence, the competition between NATO and EU is temporary with the tendency of NATO to become more and more similar to the EU. The EU is now perceived as a successful and dominant partner in the same organizational environment. The roles are reversed. As a result of isomorphic pressures, NATO seeks to become an organization for international crisis management including civilian capabilities in order to remain a relevant global security actor. The initiative towards the conclusion of "Berlin plus in reverse" arrangements which could allow NATO to draw on EU's civilian assets in crisis management operations goes in that direction (Kammel and Zyla, 2011: 655). The EU is now perceived by NATO as a legitimate and successful crisis management actor. In the situation of uncertainty, NATO will adopt EU structures as appropriate.

## CONCLUSION

In this article, the authors tried to explain the dynamics of CSDP- NATO relation from the point of view of sociological institutionalism and mechanism of isomorphism. Through institutional isomorphism, the CSDP became increasingly similar to NATO. The development of the CSDP was based on the imitation of NATO structures which was perceived to be a legitimate way to institutionalize CSDP. With time, however, increasing similarity leads to a divergence and competition between both organizations. The actions undertaken by the EU increasingly shifted away from the initial pattern of institutional isomorphism and fostered EU autonomy in the crisis management domain (Lachmann, 2010: 22). The "silent decoupling" between NATO and the EU has gradually taken place. However, the structural variations between organizations persist in line with the demands of external environment which are, rather than an organization's own desire for more efficiency, drivers of organizational change. In that regard, the difference between NATO and the EU can be regarded as temporary. EU succeeded to become a legitimate and successful actor, while NATO had difficulty to conform to expectations of its environment. Isomorphic pressures leads NATO to perceive EU as a legitimate and successful crisis management actor. In this situation of uncertainty, NATO has a tendency to become more and more similar to the EU. The initiative to include civilian capabilities in NATO's crisis management approach and to put forward the conclusion of "Berlin plus in reverse" arrangements confirms this approach.

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## **NATO AND EU IN MILITARY CRISIS MANAGEMENT: COMPLEMENTARITY OR RIVALRY?**

### **Abstract**

In this article the authors explore the relationship between EU and NATO as two key actors of the European security architecture. What is the nature of this relationship and what are the implications of this relationship for the security environment? Is this relationship characterized by complementarity or rivalry? In order to answer those questions the authors will rely on the concept of institutional isomorphism as a helpful analytical tool that can illuminate the dynamics of the relation between NATO and the Common Security and Defence Policy of the EU (CSDP). In this paper the focus will be first on the basics of sociological institutionalism, which is based on similarity and homogenization of organizational fields that are part of the same organizational space and then the authors will explain the CSDP-NATO relationship by using the concept of isomorphism. The authors conclude that, at first, there was organizational similarity between CSDP and NATO, but with time this relation led to the competition and overlapping between two organizations. Therefore the evolution of the CSDP-NATO relation from cooperation to rivalry has consequences for the security environment and efficiency of the military crisis management.

**Key words:** NATO, EU, institutional isomorphism, complementarity, rivalry