

European NATO vs Non-NATO? Economic Gains Justify Action Beyond Defence

Fiona Stewart Vidler MBA MSc MLIBF*

Finance Economics - Advanced Researcher,
Bournemouth University Business School, UK

***Corresponding Author**

Fiona Stewart Vidler MBA MSc MLIBF, Finance Economics – Advanced Researcher, Bournemouth University Business School, UK.

Submitted: 2026, Jun 03; **Accepted:** 2026, Jun 23; **Published:** 2026, Jun 29

Citation: Vidler, F. S. (2026). European NATO vs Non-NATO? Economic Gains Justify Action Beyond Defence. *J Invest Bank Finance*, 4(2), 01-10.

Abstract

Exploratory findings show a contentious spill-over mitigation positive economic effect of NATO beyond defence that benefits business trading for firms, visible in less financial constraint, less bribery incidence, increased FDI, increased productivity outcomes and increased GDP/capita. A comparison of NATO and non-NATO, 10,000 entrepreneurial SME firms in manufacturing diversity across 27 European states in crisis turbulence, where conceptually “alliance power” with geopolitics in Eastern Europe, Eastern Frontier and Ukraine emerged from hidden shadows with Zeit Wende 24022022 and ended ‘global peace.’ Re-armament defence of Europe itself means no diplomatic platitudes can regain security ‘reality trust’ with contentment peace in ongoing alert status. A competitive co-operative business financial development is imperative now for sustainable survival. Why European NATO control or a peacekeeping force (leading Ukraine manufacturing tech, France and Canada) has merits with US like WWI, WWII, and WWII realistically fears being backstop in exchange for US airbases hosted in Europe?

Keywords: Crisis, NATO, European NATO, Other Peacekeeping Task Forces, Eastern Europe, SMEs, NATO Economic Effect, FDI, Competivity Policy, Co-Operative Competivity, Sustainability, War.

1. Elevator Pitch

This research review explores 10,000 SMEs (firms) across 27 Eastern European economies, comparing NATO and non-NATO countries, using pre-crisis/crisis 2019 data from World Bank and EBRD (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development). It adds evidence to broader debates on “European NATO” or “European peacekeeping force.” It contributes towards a gap (void paucity of scholarly literature) in scientific research knowledge with geopolitics, aiding decision-making and foreign geo-policy, providing initial measures of positive differences in means for a specific geo-economic region for Eastern Europe’s ‘NATO vs non-NATO.’

The research introduces the concept of co-operative “alliance power,” integrating core themes of financial constraints, bribery incidence, and productivity. The exploratory findings suggest a potential positive “NATO effect” and a positive “NATO economic effect” on European SMEs (small medium enterprise firms) the most entrepreneurial [1,2].

Defence with security guarantees for business and trade seems imperative. SMEs in or close to conflict or war zones face disrupted

flights, risk exposure to drones, damaged transport, and undercover deliveries or business operations are not trackable contributions to GDP economic measures. Furthermore, failures in defence with power and internet outage impair SMEs operations. All deters foreign investors ready to invest in a development growth zone with an attractive risky high return yield [1,2].

Moreover, a form of military Keynesianism is an economic policy based upon the premise that a government by increasing defence spending can increase economic growth and GDP. It is a stimulus policy according to John Maynard Keynes, who died just before World War II ended. To extrapolate, future implications for these preliminary findings are economies investing in (increasing) “alliance power” spending, like NATO or another similar peace keeping task force, and diverse manufacturing trades, suggested as not only defence but a potential fiscal policy with positive economic benefits for the fastest growing SME firms.

2. Author’s Main Message

Exploration of a mythical concept of the ‘NATO Economic Effect’ since early 2022 by the author, the case for only the Eastern European countries of NATO vs non-NATO in economic productivity terms,

evidence for a speculated positive effect or spillover that security guarantees (peace) enhances trading business transformation and investment possibilities beyond pure functional defence? Notably (this is definitely not the entire NATO or North Atlantic countries), almost a forerunner of an initial conceptual assessment of a united European NATO (although Russian aligned nations like Slovakia may veto) like a ‘peacekeeping force’ or similar alternatives (now seriously discussed in mid2020s as Europe rearms 2025 beyond war preparations in 2024 for the security of Europe. It is now conceivable that 30 NATO allies without the USA is stronger than Russia and are closing the feasibility gap on being independent and more efficient than the solo USA strength. This is becoming critical by the Eastern Frontier seeking peace and business

transformation, with economic benefits where one key measure here is productivity outcomes.

Four key indicators are used by the author, accepted to be top ongoing concerns of importance to government agendas, investors, academics, and practitioners, so investigated in the novel context of European NATO vs non-NATO: financial constraint, bribery incidence, productivity and FDI (foreign investment) and findings summarised below. Relevant GDP per capita measures of growth are also depicted. Key is the NATO economic effects were inconceivable beyond defence, according to popular scholarly opinion, so the unexpected findings of positive benefits are encouraging but need further research investment.

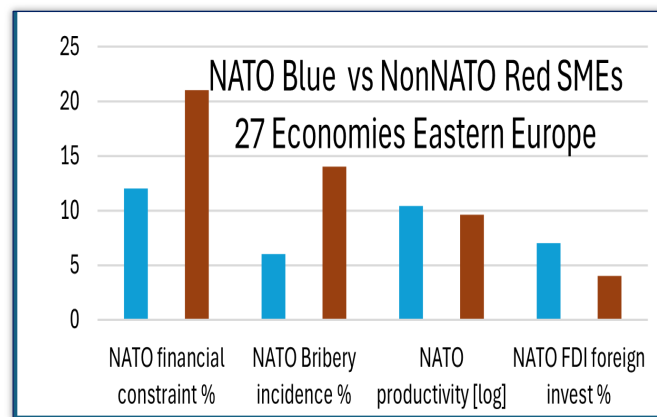


Figure 1: Key Economic Indicators: NATO vs non-NATO (9030 SMEs Eastern Europe) – Source Author’s construct

Indicator data is derived from World Bank/EBRD sources then innovatively applied to NATO vs non-NATO for 9030 SME individual firms across 27 European countries, naturally splitting the data set into two subsamples 50:50 normal distribution, with very good robust properties for analysis. Notably of general interest on these indicators and industry profile sectors are the known transition reports issued by EBRD 2019 and EBRD 2024/2025 [2,3].

3. Motivation

“The security of one country is a foundation for stability, economic growth, and prosperous society. NATO's purpose is to guarantee the freedom and security of its members, with the statistical analyses providing evidence, therefore contributing to the attractiveness of a member country as a host for FDI, which would boost investment and capital stock growth dynamics and increased exports and potential output in the longer run, productivity growth, decreased unemployment as well as sustainable development [4-6].

In essence, this review is a call for further future research, scientific evidence to support effective decision-making in grey areas of the unknown beyond demented chaos of the end of peace since World War II that needs doing into the contentious speculative notion of not only a NATO effect but a beneficial positive NATO economic effect beyond pure defence function. Logically, the aspiration after

attainment of peace stability comes relevant sustainability business transformation beyond finance economic destabilisation where SMEs in manufacturing (like precious minerals - Vakulchuk, 2020;2023) could support both an economy and critical defence [6-8].

Can Eastern European NATO membership unity achieve both, also is further NATO accession of new members (near the Russian borders) or an alternative peacekeeping force concept of most of the key European NATO players possible to benefit not only Eastern Europe, the Eastern Frontier but the whole of Europe? Instead of Europe bowing to bigger powers, united it can attain equal super power status for Europe too. Furthermore, by Europe taking urgent responsible action for itself, Europe reduces volatile risk even eliminates its dependency on others (like the USA) and becoming strong is an attractive asset to investors and deters aggressor take-overs.

Prior to 2019, China was an emerging transition economy last decade of unknown quantity potential not a super-power world leader like today, though one could argue it is in the 2020s recovering its dynasty self-contained powers of ancient times prior. Recent news in May 2026, the Economist, reports China attempts co-operative competition with USA. It should be noted the EU (outside scope review) is not this peace-keeping force, but has a

financial role of value, EU is merely a facilitator of group think connective meetings with brokerage of monies (like 90 billion euros loan 2026-2027 Ukraine for frontier defence and rebuilding), governance bureaucracy, not include all European nations with top defence and diverse manufacturing sectors expertise.

3.1 NATO Spill-Over Effect Benefits Bilateral Trade and Conflict

European NATO (or similar peace keeping force) justified as of growing interest in recent times with the contemplation does it have a spill over economic effect or not, as well as defence. There little scholarly evidence to date for this notion, partly due to lack of demand need in Europe itself during a perpetual peace since World War II, with barely a few academics with many nations’ research to comment or support the notion beyond a rare comparison with a small group of countries for one country accession to NATO, being Macedonia in 2019 [6,9]. This theme now is growing in multi-polar popularity, especially for a few volatile political Eastern European countries looking for NATO accession, claiming non-EU promotes economic business trading benefits beyond obvious defence. Various lower statuses of EU or NATO accession processes are too flimsy to incorporate as the nation’s remain cynical until full members.

“The impulse which, we told, is now strong in the mind of the United States quit of the turmoil, the complication, the violence, the expense, the problems. No one can feel more intensely than the writer. But if America recalls for a moment what Europe has meant to her and still means to her, reject counsels of indifference and isolation, and act upon decisive issues for the progress and civilisation of all humankind?” famous words by John Maynard Keynes in 1936. This re-echoes again in the mid2020s, 250 years after the historic USA/European partnership formation.

This shows how this intertwined geopolitical tension is relevant cannot be dismissed as merely interesting by scholars. Especially as turmoil violence echoes of turbulent stress times which impacts on costs to society of corruption and financial constraint indicators in the business environment of which business SMEs impacts on survival and growth [10]. Simply put assessing global positive NATO benefits against other forms of defence forces – trading with trade agreements is positive and conflict has negative effects and should be avoided [10]. This has ramifications for European NATO.

4. Findings

The positivity of change for NATO vs non-NATO economies during/after the third decade of independence from Russia is visible (it can be contrasted against a different negative influence of FSU vs nonFSU for the same total of 9030 SMEs in author’s previous JIBF paper – Vidler, 2025, so its significance is unlikely to be spurious artefacts), note the co-operative “alliance power” concept, surprisingly empirical evidence is not negligible or even close to zero. This is across financial constraints, bribery incidence, productivity, FDI and includes GDP/capita differences.

It suggests a NATO economic effect difference gains truly could exist for SME firms but needs strengthening by a large investment into future research. Critique, there is no ‘pure’ NATO isolatable economic effect, spillover benefit, beyond defence supporting rare research (as is implied too for other EU memberships).

So, what does the empirical evidence of this study show using its indicators for European style NATO versus non-NATO within Eastern Europe/ECA borders when looking at analysis of prediction, plausibility and associations?

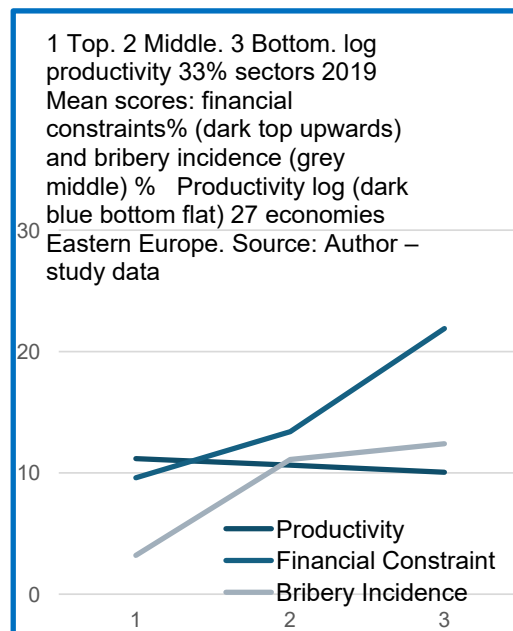


Figure 2: Study Data for Productivity – total 9030 SMEs in Eastern Europe/ECA borders divided into two roughly equal subsamples of European NATO and non-NATO – Source Author’s own construct

4.1 Financial Constraint

The most noteworthy descriptive statistics are: The means for financial constraint 2019 NATO is 11.7%, almost half that compared to 2019 non-NATO is 20.7 %.

Interesting diverging changes have occurred post GFC 2008/9 as naturally the number of firms grew in numbers and percentages recorded for criteria barriers effect non-NATO more than NATO. The means for financial constraint 2008/9 NATO although larger is 24.7% but is like 2008/9 non-NATO is 28.7%, suggesting all economies underwent great financial constraint due to GFC which

is hardly surprising but does put a quantification plausibility figure upon it beyond subjective perception, showing that some firms did not report financial constraints had other survival strategies for financial development. But converging outcomes not occurring as fast as predicted.

At the focus turning point 2019, NATO is offering reductions in financial constraint albeit at lower levels compared to nonNATO, however although these levels as expected are higher in magnitude in 2008/9 there is little difference between NATO and NonNATO for severe GFC financial constraint of all firms in extreme shock.

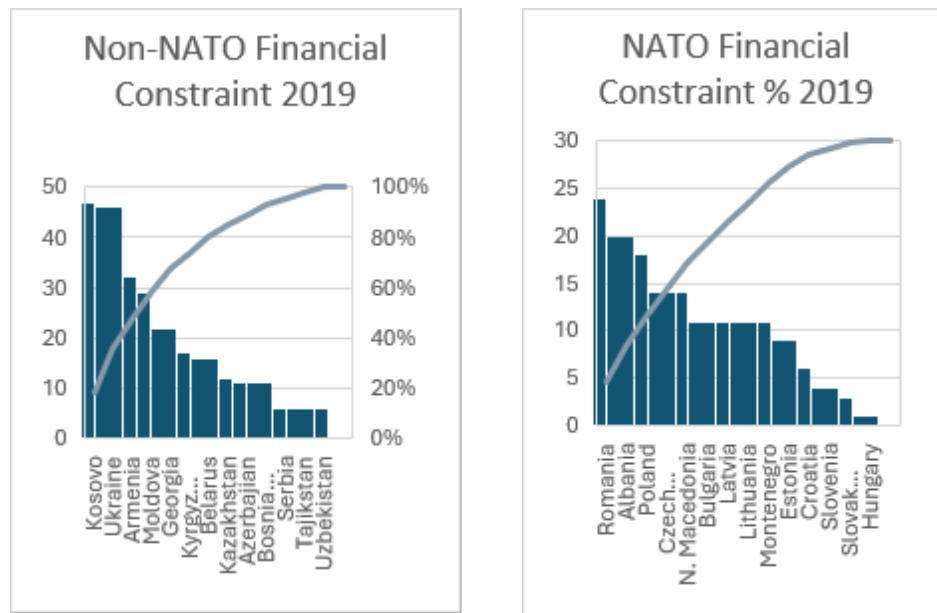


Figure 3: NATO vs nonNATO 2019 Financial Constraint % by 27 European Economies – Source Author’s own construct, initially derived World Bank/EBRD 2019 sources.

4.2 Bribery Incidence

Notably, Bribery incidence for the focus 2019 Nato is 6.4% is half compared to non-Nato is 13.8 %. NATO membership economies are not only significantly less financially constrained but demonstrate less bribery incidence than non-Nato in 2019. With Transparency International showing a pervasive growth in corruption generally in a number of countries.

Dramatic reductions in bribery incidence have occurred (but are still too high pervasive when can be negligible in some economies) since GFC providing quantification empirical evidence beyond subjective speculation, bribery increases under duress in stress turbulent times within survival environments. Corruption is generally accepted as when present undesirable as distorts financial markets and firm performance.

Bribery incidence 2008/9 GFC for NATO is 8.1% greatly benefits

when compared to 2008/9 non-NATO is 28.3%. NATO membership quantified with empirical evidence on the business environment as being aligned to far less bribery corruption compared to non-NATO and this is one of the goals of NATO membership (avoids admittance of members with negatives like high corruption, low regulation of law, high risk or incidents of political instability and conflict).

It also seems that the higher figures for bribery incidence may make a more noteworthy analysis than lower financial constraint, however these are the two leading determinants indicators on government agendas as loans have decreased in significance due to credit bureaus and other sources supporting financial development in Eastern Europe since 2019.

This supported by the author extracting well-known Transparency International Data 2019:

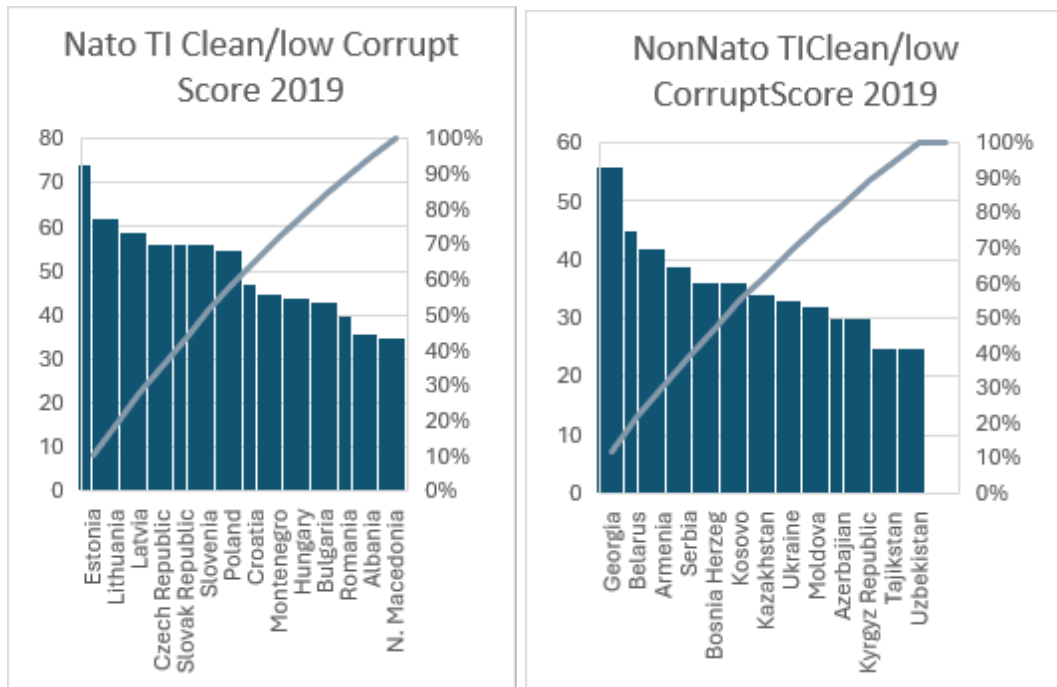


Figure 4: Note: clean score scale higher NATO i.e. less corruption (scales differ left right) – Source Author construct from research data

The diagrams clearly show the picture for TI clean/corrupt score where 60-70 is high out of maximum of 100 score for clean least corruption and 20-30 or below 40 is low least impressive corrupt scores. In Eastern Europe in 2019 and beyond times, 90% of businesses are SMEs so can extrapolate using the macroeconomics of the TI firm data to create a picture. Note: TI is all types of

business sectors and firm sizes whereas study is manufacturing only, all firms not just SMEs.

4.3 Productivity

This robustly double-checked with two methodologies of t and z tests to check difference means:

<p>T-test i 4534 10.37 0.26 4496 9.61 0.3 by STATA latest software T-Test difference between two means NATO (X) vs NON-NATO (Y)</p> <p>Two-sample t test with equal variances Log Productivity (output per worker)</p> <p> Obs Mean Std. err. . Std. dev. [95% conf. interval]</p> <p>-----+-----</p> <p>x 4,534 10.37 .0038613 .26 10.36243 10.37757 y 4,496 9.61 .0044741 .3 9.601229 9.618771</p> <p>-----+-----</p> <p>Combined 9,030 9.991599 .0049712 .4723956 9.981854 10.00134</p> <p>-----+-----</p> <p>diff .76 .0059064 .7484221 .7715779</p> <p>-----+-----</p> <p>diff = mean(x) - mean(y) t = 128.6739 H0: diff = 0 Degrees of freedom = 9028 Ha: diff < 0 Ha: diff != 0 Ha: diff > 0 Pr(T < t) = 1.0000 Pr(T > t) = 0.0000 Pr(T > t) = 0.0000</p>	<p>Z-test i 4534 10.37 0.26 4496 9.61 0.37 METHODOLOGY TESTS Z-Score difference between two means NATO (X) vs NON-NATO (Y)</p> <p>Two-sample z test Log Productivity (output per worker)</p> <p> Obs Mean Std. err. . Std. dev. [95% conf. interval]</p> <p>-----+-----</p> <p>x 4,534 10.37 .0038613 .26 10.36243 10.37757 y 4,496 9.61 .0055181 .37 9.599185 9.620815</p> <p>-----+-----</p> <p>diff .76 .0067349 .7467998 .7732002</p> <p>-----+-----</p> <p>diff = mean(x) - mean(y) z = 112.8451 H0: diff = 0 Ha: diff < 0 Ha: diff != 0 Ha: diff > 0 Pr(Z < z) = 1.0000 Pr(Z > z) = 0.0000 Pr(Z > z) = 0.0000</p>
--	---

NATO (X) Eastern Europe only	Alb	Bul	Cro	Cze	Est	Hun	Lat	Lit	Mon	N.M	Pol	Rom	Slk	Sle
------------------------------	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

Figure 5: t-test and z-test analyses: NATO vs nonNATO mean differences productivity - Source: Author Researcher data processes (data derived World Bank 2019).

Both P and Z = high scores suggests highly significant differences of means = approx. positive 7% for sample 9030 SMEs. It is simple acceptable economics as split into two ~ equal size SME firms subsamples in NATO or not. Normal distribution, skew, standard error values = quality data sets. [note author other complex weighted multinomial regression analysis for POMs is similar >6%].

For both t-test and z-score for large samples these both show the means are highly significantly different for NATO (X) and nonNATO (Y). The difference in the means is 0.76 approx. 7% which is close to >6% from multinomials = another weighted regression analysis. So, there is a positive NATO economic effect for SMEs regarding productivity comparing NATO to non-NATO in Eastern Europe transition economies, where N=9030 SME firms across 27 economies of study. This impactfully shows difference between the two groups: NATO and nonNATO economies in this European SME study. The larger the t score (or z score) the larger difference between the samples (in the subsamples), this means that the test results replicated is more feasible, adding initial empirical quantification for the speculative notion of a positive NATO economic effect where none should exist (for N = 9030 SMEs is a sufficiently large sample total of two subsamples):

'A positive relationship NATO (alliance economies vs nonNATO ex-Russia) SME firm productivity.'

4.3.1 Productivity Outcomes and Informal Relationships With Co-operative Alliances.

With the debates increasing in Eastern Europe (and beyond its borders) on the dissipating effect of the EU, which notably relates to finance, infrastructure and legislation, that some speculate is weakening, especially in Eastern Europe (from an East-West perspective of closest distance), so the cynics state it is hardly progressing growing or offering enhanced solutions beyond the norm, especially to Eastern Europe, where a number of economies are stuck in accession processes and do not belong to the EU, yet are thriving, seeking increasing other co-operative alliance or "alliance power" like scenarios. What economies need to grow is financial development and funding, with no distortion's impediments from corruption, and attract FDI. Like scenarios

where Ukraine receives EU sourced funds and gives back in terms of defence securities or advanced tech.

Furthermore, the increase in informal relationships and co-operative "alliance power" are escaping the umbrella of the EU in Eastern Europe. This shows the practical reality of challenging scenarios in co-operation "alliance power," where further research into this notable concept is required as impacts on creating a peace-keeping task force formation (whether this is NATO based or other). This is all relevant to finance economic destabilisation and to 'fix the economy.'

4.4 FDI

Two key emphatic points are:

'The real issue of NATO membership and especially desirable critical FDI inflows, however, importance of host country's political instability and riskiness for the investment decision of a foreign investor [6,10].'

"NATO economic effect" – What does it entail? NATO's purpose is to guarantee the freedom and security of its members. Without security, we cannot speak about stability, democracy, economic growth, and prosperity. NATO membership can contribute to the attractiveness of a member country as a host for foreign direct investment (FDI) by reducing the country's (perceived) political instability and risk in the eyes of foreign investors [9,10].

For further points on understanding FDI in this context in general (not NATO necessarily) in Eastern Europe, one recommended reference is FDI in transition economies [11].

4.5 GDP/Capita

GDP/capita can be part of a measure of productive economic growth and in this author's study data chart shows a visible difference between NATO members and non-NATO for Eastern Europe – a kind of Eastern European NATO (no data from west, biggest USA, or Canada) – but 30 NATO members in whole of Europe, (plus Canada is 31) contribute more than one USA to NATO now.

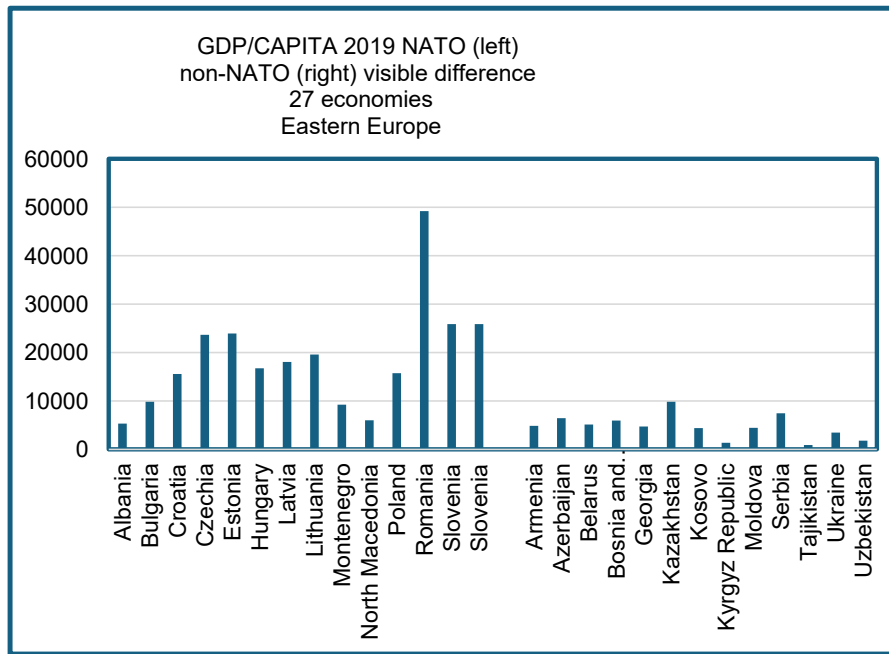


Figure 7: GDP/Capita – Macroeconomic Influences on SME Firms - Source: Author’s own construct.

4.6 Competitiveness

The author has shown that productivity outcome can be novelty conceptualised as a growth concept against competitiveness data for 27 economies in Eastern Europe, this highlights a direction for further research by the author as it needs further investigation, especially as competitiveness policy is re-emerging mid2020s like a buzz word in financial economics and economic policies worldwide.

As the competitiveness score increases, so does the log of productivity outcome for SMEs, this shows a close fit to the trend line, with a visible potential for high significance likely, this means possibly increasing competitiveness could be a strong marker indicator for productivity. [Published poster conference Vidler 2024] *cited and recommended by other scholars worldwide as lack of crisis data like this. Same 27 economies, total effect not split into subsamples of NATO or not. Increasing competitiveness. Productivity, co-operation links to increased economic benefits.

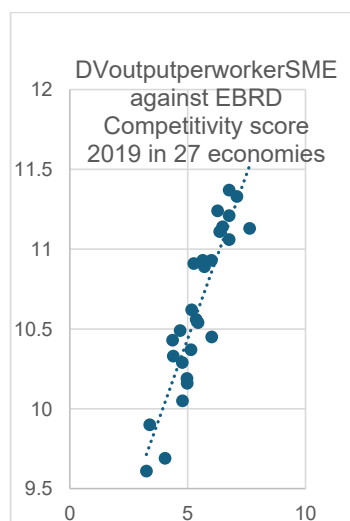


Figure 8: Log Productivity driver as element of a Growth Model – against EBRD competitiveness data (financialization) – Source Author construct with study log productivity data for total 9030 SMEs across 27 Eastern European Countries.

It proposed that Competitiveness (part of financialization and of which a component when increasing success would be reducing financial constraints experienced), so an ideal marker in contemporary current times for measuring increasing progress as a transition economy, as competition defined by IMF as criteria for progressing transition economies. This means highly relevant to productivity outcomes and features in EBRD transition reports 2024/2025 on industry profiles for specially manufacturing.

5. Gaps and Limitations

This recent need viewed by an increasing number of researchers like the author for ‘a barrier philosophy’ against Russia’s invasion across Ukraine’s constitutional borders, which is known to be one of the pre-existing aims of NATO (in its support for the protection of Europe). This article is initial exploratory, but its viewpoints concur with a growing number of emerging academics, practitioners and policy makers interested in investigating these effects beyond mainstream acceptance of status quo, where the author admits that little literature exists pertaining to a positive NATO economic effect, nor the specifics for the geoeconomic zone of Eastern Europe.

The literature recently recommends for the key indicators of corruption and financial constraints obstacles: that the barrier of corruption is generally viewed in terms of examining estimating plausible causal effects, associations and consequences like this study does (as opposed to precision modelling stances of limitations of econometrics in crisis when not stability), and suitable contributions or anti-corruption measures are beneficial as it is believed that corruption impacts on reducing economic growth, so it matters. Whereas financial constraints or lack need to be related to financial development, with a growing interest on the known theme of competitiveness proving to be of growing interest again. Furthermore, these effects are of great interest for investigating NATO vs nonNATO economic effects.

Geopolitics, geo-policy and geoeconomics are recent re-emerging growth phenomena being recently recognised as acceptable and explained to academics as not all accept this as logically so in the mid-2020s by Sandford US scholars and proposed earlier as intertwined in Economics by Cambridge University, UK and highly relevant to Europe [12].

Note: the last round of largest Eastern Europe data sets is robust reliable valid and rare almost unique from World Bank BEEPs data/EBRD 2019 with same criteria as limited comparison 2008/9 but note differs from 2005 data sets used by researchers. In the 2020s, since 2019 different World Bank WBES data sets use similar criteria but are smaller excluding difficult or conflict zones reduces the countries available in the 2020s or over 3 years collated, business criteria changed or as in other parts of world scenarios, there is no helpful WBES longitudinal sequential data.

6. Conclusions and Implications

Outcomes for the exploratory initial findings with “alliance

power” like NATO adds business sustainability transformation value. Impacts 2020s after turning point 2019, when writing on the wall, also shows increased SMEs firm financial development, competitiveness and clean score (decreasing corruption) improves productivity outcomes and growth.

This economic effect seems to increase for NATO compared to non-NATO economies for SME firms in manufacturing sectors of Eastern Europe when it should be negligible not exist. Calls for further research investment as relevant to researchers, decision-makers, SMEs, policy makers, media, journals, reports, networks.

*Data derived calculated (excludes Russia) 10,000 SMEs -World Bank, EBRD, Transparency International public researcher databases/study computations. SMEs are 90% economy/macro-economic for Eastern Europe unlike Western Europe where more multinationals exist, so making it an attractive region for investors.

It is conceivable that a positive NATO influence exists after 35 years of Eastern European independence that furthermore has positive financial economic benefits beyond defence expectations. If so, what could the consequences and implications be for “the West?” This presents advantages of innovative diversity and challenges of cohesive converging co-operative alliances within a peace keeping force of 30 or so countries for Europe where not all countries are members of NATO (or even EU or any alliance).

The research review is early plausible quantification empirical evidence of associations with robust global indicators and derived reliable valid data sources (World Bank/EBRD/Transparency International) of economic interest applied to the NATO Economic Effect, contentious findings as such on co-operative alliances contribute. Is NATO’s value, both as an assessable positive effect and a positive NATO economic effect beyond useful conjecture or can one cynically dismiss it, or should one invest in actions beyond defence too? Its initial insights presents challenging evidence that addresses scholarly, professionals, practitioners, businesses, investors and policymaker needs strengthening by additional future research and protection of the Eastern Frontier – although this depends on your perspective where one is standing in the world itself.

The author’s notion of a turning point as 2019 has also been reinforced recently noted as a Minsky Moment and its financial instability hypothesis not only ‘by banking governors in recent financial instability’ but as ‘a Climate Minsky Moment 2019 for destructive climate change’ [13]. A new era starting to become of great academic interest, only recently scholars started to investigate in the mid2020s because it has gone on for so long, breaking the silence [14,15].

As the end of the 2020s races towards all, with potentially tricky 2027 and 2030 points acknowledged ahead with unknown flashpoints likely; 2026 finally also shows Oxford, UK scholars

joining these debates at the end of 2026 with a conference here too now (in line with this cutting-edge JIBF research review) – Oxford, UK, presents its themes of: ‘Europe in a Fragmented World: Rearmament, Geopolitical shifts, and the Struggle for Socio-Economic Alternatives.’ “The renewed militarisation of Europe is unfolding amid a convergence of deepening financialisation, global economic fragmentation, resurgent fiscal austerity, and intensifying climate-pressure forces that collectively strain.”

Implications and further investigative research.

Implications of this study for future research involve not only investigating the NATO Economic Effect for business transformation and productivity growth part of Economic Growth, intertwining geopolitics geo-economics with implications for geo-policy on the eastern frontier of Europe but even exploring the benefits of NMS NATO accession of other countries (in the past inconceivable due to joining criteria) like Georgia and Ukraine, even Moldova, strategically positioned as vulnerable to join recent admissions of North Macedonia, Finland and Sweden, when the imperative need strategically outweighs the political instability and views of Russia (alongside China, Iran and others) [16].

So, one option of several out there is: it would make sense to urgently establish beyond hypothetical discussions a priority peacekeeping task force to help strengthen secure Europe to reduce risk of catastrophe through conflict, war or lethal nuclear radiation with the reassurance that protected states deter aggression, safer for investment and are more likely to grow develop and be sustainable in effect securing Europe’s borders and countries within, making attack difficult to achieve with a united defence shield focussed on economics, business development, growth and trade making it an asset not an acquisition takeover bid, an example is Ukraine tech and drones deals with the gulf aiding security with benefits to many sides.

This leaves resources and energy to focus on the bigger picture of slowing extremes of a frozen or flooded or burning fiery unsustainable territory – alternatively it may be a conundrum with no solutions and a planet destiny that cannot sustain civilisations, vulnerable to shearing split disintegrating into parts due to nuclear shocks and natural phenomena radiating out into its own hidden faults tipping points. Planet Earth is more fluid insubstantial than solid in form, it has faced several extinctions before and one may have to face up to that one option of future reality beyond virtual reality within its billions of years of existence, as realities of climate change extremes, conflicts, land grabs over future scarcity are happening far faster sooner than the predicted potential of 2030 or 2040 onwards.

Only now are more scholars joining the debates raised in this review where scant scholarly publications exist. For example (addressing broader concerns of economics not necessarily peacekeeping or NATO): John T. Harvey, Texas University, known Heterodox Economics scholar, presents his new book at a London Seminar 2026, as one of recent publications forthcoming now on the economics ‘*Our biggest obstacle–formidable at this time – fixing*

the economy’ is philosophical and is his key takeaway message. Policy makers and the general public often have a difficult time conceptualizing the process by which we can extricate ourselves - the fault of the economics discipline. It is based heavily on Keynes, the economist whose work explained our macroeconomy was largely ignored. The insights of Davidson, Kalecki, Minsky “Minsky Moment” – overlooked by orthodoxy. This framework, a narrative account of “US business cycles from 1954-2020 by John T Harvey.’ Critique perhaps the first time Keynes accounts for such a long time period as opposed to spikes and lesser length narratives and the key role of finance economics.

However, the author of this review, who perhaps falls into a growing niche for crisis research between Heterodox and Econometrics that inclines towards Heterodox crisis economics, now notes in line with Keynes (as a member of PKES, the Post-Keynesian Economics Society), who once said his prophecies were more successful than his policies and his visions of apocalypse, perhaps one can speculate. What, when, where, how, why of defence and when to act by being defensive or to mitigate danger with defence are as history shows in reality difficult to predict accurately with flashpoints to existence itself threatening in the next few years by end of 2030. In the meantime, urgent economic action can be taken with co-operative peace keeping alliances against financial economic destabilisation beyond defence is required instead of waiting for a trigger to happen, where Europe is one of the central trading players of the world with critical resources for investment not demented land grabs.

Final Note

Coincidence momentum is building now, as the authors earlier preprints upon which this review is based are - by Elsevier or Bournemouth University Conference poster/abstract/articles, end of 2025 – its timing NATO’s industry summit 05/06 Nov 2025 Innovate Sustain Change with stated action plans needed is months not years. The NATO-Industry Forum 2025, November 5-6, 2025; Bucharest, focus theme “Rearming NATO – Innovate, Accelerate, sustain : “Strengthening the dialogue between NATO and the defence industry, addressing how industry can support NATO’s defence investment and production objectives. Key features are NATO leaders’ discussions on innovative mechanisms for increasing defence production and capitalising commercial innovation – defence innovation and industry readiness. The author states the answer is not necessarily European NATO, but its potential 30 allied members are already connected, or a Canadian led force of 40 allied or below 9 French led, all indicate the need of an ongoing critical concern the economics and defence demise of Europe with an active peacekeeping force beyond diplomatic words and meetings.

Furthermore, end of May 2026, media and analysts reported a NATO meeting in Brussels, beyond 2026 media news reports, that after 77 years of dominance the USA may have possibly formally informed allies of the greatest transformation since the Cold War, on its continued intentions of sharp reduction of military forces support to the alliance for European Crisis Defence. The day

after this meeting, Norway, one of NATO's founding members, coincidentally made a Paris Agreement under France's growing umbrella of nine countries with a nuclear deterrence framework and Europe accelerates its own independent military support with 'European-made drones, Swedish surveillance aircraft, German armoured systems, French nuclear guarantees described as "European Strategic Autonomy," Canadian-European defence integration, sovereign satellite constellations, and EU military procurement programs are all expanding simultaneously while European reliance on American systems diminishes declines reorganising in case of a permanent shift' and a peace-keeping force is getting more imminent for the first time in NATO's formation history since 1949, changing global co-operative 'alliance power' faster than predicted expectations 2027 to 2030.

Acknowledgements

This is an Independent solo author with potential first of its kind original contributions in this first peer reviewed 'unique' manuscript of a research review presented, agreed is the British author has all rights to solo authorship (conceptual pioneering work related to parts on NATO vs nonNATO, co-operative "alliance powers", competitiveness and peacekeeping forces as featured end of 2025/2026 here or in preprints or conference posters to date on Research Gate, Google Scholar and SSRN Elsevier. It does not necessarily represent the independent diverse viewpoints of all at Bournemouth University (BU) or its publishers. Immense gratitude to her BU Business School, faculty of Business and Law (BAL) which is independently overseen by a professorial led BU RIE Research Innovation Enterprise, Bournemouth University, UK, and including: - Einar Thorsen (RIE Dean), Lee Miles (Associate Dean), Dermot McCarthy (one Associate Head BUBS) – cutting-edge leading research from 'culture to climate change to crisis' that makes a difference towards decision-making, with insights and implications for ongoing concerns with impact from local community to national to international levels. Declaration this article does not use artificial intelligence tools.

References

1. Astrov, V., Ghodsi, M., Grieveson, R., Holzner, M., Kochnev, A., Landesmann, M., ... & Bykova, A. (2022). Russia's invasion of Ukraine: assessment of the humanitarian, economic, and financial impact in the short and medium term. *International Economics and Economic Policy*, 19(2), 331-381.
2. Vidler, F., 2025, European Crisis -NATO vs non-NATO SME (Firm) Economic Benefits? (November 05, 2025). Preprint available at Elsevier
3. Vidler, F. (2025). European Crisis-NATO vs non-NATO SME

- (Firm) Economic Benefits?. Conference Available at Research Gate.
4. Avlijaš, S. (2025). Central and Eastern European Growth Regimes. *Growth Strategies and Welfare Reforms: How Nations Cope with Economic Transitions*, 116.
5. Accountability, C. (2025). *Crude Accountability's Comments on the EBRD's Azerbaijan Country Strategy for 2025-2030. CRUDE ACCOUNTABILITY.*
6. Elezi and Kurtishi, 2019. Economic Benefits of Joining NATO -The Case of New Member States and Potential Impact on Sustainable Development in Macedonia. *International Journal of Scientific Engineering and Research (IJSER)*ISSN (Online February 2019): 7 (2).
7. Vakulchuk, R., Overland, I., & Scholten, D. (2020). Renewable energy and geopolitics: A review. *Renewable and sustainable energy reviews*, 122, 109547.
8. Vakulchuk, R. (2023). Critical materials for development: a new trajectory for Norwegian foreign aid policy. *Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI).*
9. Avlijaš, S., Bohle, D., Medve-Bálint, G., & Simons, J. P. (2026). Shifting the Power Balance in the EU's Single Market? Central and Eastern European Agents of Change. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies.*
10. Azu, N. P., Atta Mills, E. F. E., & Akanegbu, B. N. (2023). Gravity assessment of the impact of alliances on bilateral trade: A comparative analysis of ECOMOG and NATO. *International Journal of Finance & Economics*, 28(2), 1929-1938.
11. Estrin, S. (2017). Foreign direct investment and employment in transition economies. *IZA World of labor.*
12. Clayton, C., Maggiori, M., & Schreger, J. (2026). A framework for geoeconomics. *Power to make sense of a Turbulent World. Econometrica*, 94(1), 105-136. Paper SIEPR (Stanford).
13. Mascarenhas, C.M., 2025. *2025 Brazilian Keynesian Review*, 11(2), p.363-383.
14. Palley, T., Giammetti.R. and Meridionale.L., 2024. Introduction: the challenge of political economy of war and peace. *Review of Keynesian Economics*, (12), 3, Autumn 2024, 275–277.
15. Vidler, F. (2024). *Keynes World War, Prophecies And Productivity Growth In Economic Crisis-A Critical Review. Prophecies And Productivity Growth In Economic Crisis-A Critical Review (November 12, 2024) Working Paper.*
16. Vidler, F. (2025). FSU vs NonFSU Impacts for Developing European SME Firm Productivity-Links to Critical Minerals Manufacturing.

Copyright: ©2026 Fiona Stewart Vidler MBA MSc MLIBF. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.