

NATO Transformation and Centers of Excellence

Analyzing Rationale and Roles

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Master Thesis

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Analyzing NATO Centers of Excellence

NATO Transformation and Centers of Excellence: Analyzing Rationale and Roles.

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Abstract

Transformation in NATO has been a recurring and constant theme in the Alliance since DCI and PCC, and is an important theme although rebranded as Smart Defense. This thesis has sought to identify and map out different institutional logics of what is perceived as appropriate by key personnel within and affiliated with the concept, and to analyze the concept's roles and rationale, especially in regard to the overall transformation NATO. Two questions have guided this analysis, namely

- 1) Which institutional logics that can be identified on how the COE concept and specific centers are organized, and*
- 2) What role(s) do(es) the COE concept play in the field of defense transformation in NATO, and what is the concept's strategic intention, relevance and importance?*

The research question has been answered using a new institutionalist perspective, where the purpose has been to understand the rationale of the COE concept. Constructing institutional logics and matching the empirical evidence to these logics and their respective theoretical expectations has consequently led to the analysis in which I have concluded that a logic of defense solidarity and defense pluralism are dominant, as opposed to the less dominant logic of sovereignty and the logic of exclusiveness that was not found to be evident at all. Furthermore, in analyzing strategic roles I have found that the two most evident roles the concept plays in NATO transformation are identifying and supporting specific transformational efforts. Finally, I have found it implausible to conclude that COE concept is strategic intentional regarded from a NATO transformational perspective, but rather is a bottom-up phenomena without central steering. Nevertheless, the concept is strategically relevant for NATO transformation in the sense that it is coherent with transformational strategic guidelines, and also seems to be an important element although this conclusion needs further research and evaluation.

An executive summary for practitioners and decision-makers is attached in Appendix C.

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Table of Contents

- 1 Introduction 1**
 - 1.1 Research Questions 3
 - 1.2 Central Terms and Concepts 4
 - 1.3 Outline of the Thesis 7
- 2 Theoretical Framework 9**
 - 2.1 Using a New Institutional Perspective 10
 - 2.2 Towards a Conceptual Framework for Understanding the COE Concept..... 13
- 3 Methodological Framework 22**
 - 3.1 Case Study Research as Strategy 22
 - 3.2 A Qualitative Approach 25
 - 3.3 Validity and Reliability of this Study..... 27
- 4 Closing the Capabilities Gap 30**
 - 4.1 Ensuring Relevance Through Transformation 30
 - 4.2 NATO Centers of Excellence..... 35
- 5 Analysis 39**
 - 5.1 Identifying Institutional Logics 39
 - 5.2 COE and its Role in NATO Transformation..... 53
 - 5.3 The COE Concept’s Rationale and Roles 62
- 6 Summary and Concluding Remarks 65**
 - 6.1 Theoretical Implications..... 66
 - 6.2 Practical Implications 67
 - 6.3 Conclusion..... 70
- Appendix A – Informants 72**
- Appendix B – Illustrative Interview Guide..... 73**
- Appendix C – Executive Summary 74**
- List of references 75**

Abbreviations

ACO	Allied Command Operations
ACT	Allied Command Transformation
AJP	Allied Joint Publications
C4I	Command, control, communications, computers and intelligence
COE	Center(s) of Excellence
DCI	Defense Capabilities Initiative
EDA	European Defense Agency (EU)
EU	European Union
EUBG	European Union Battle Group
HQ	Headquarter
IGO	International Governmental Organization
IMS	International Military Staff (NATO)
JFTC	Joint Forces Training Center (NATO ACT)
JWC	Joint Warfare Center (NATO ACT)
MC	Military Committee (NATO)
MOD	Ministry of Defense
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAC	North Atlantic Council
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCS	NATO Command Structure
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRF	NATO Response Force
NURC	NATO Undersea Research Center (NATO ACT)
OOO	Out-of-cycle
PCC	Prague Capabilities Commitments
PE	Peacetime Establishment (personnel warrants)
PfP	Partnership for Peace
POW	Program of Work
RFS	Request for Support
RMA	Revolutions in Military Affairs
SACT	Supreme Allied Commander Transformation
TNB	Transformation Network Branch (NATO ACT)
TRANSNET	Transformation Network (NATO ACT)
US	United States (of America)

Full names and abbreviations for the specific Centers of Excellence are offered in section 4.2 (table 2)

1 Introduction

"In sum, as we enter the 21st century, the Euro-Atlantic community - North America and Europe together - has to face some tough challenges when it comes to improving our capability."

– Lord Robertson, NATO's 10th Secretary General 1999-2003

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union in December 1991, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has had 13 summits, occasions where Heads of State and Government of NATO member countries meet to evaluate and provide strategic direction for Alliance activities. From the summit in Brussels in 1994 to Lisbon in 2010, the summits have dealt with the overarching questions on "why we fight" and "how we fight", and last not least how to match the two essential questions with each other. Dealing with these issues in the post-Cold War era has constantly challenged the Alliance, but it has nevertheless survived into a new paradigm where it no longer faces a threat to its territory.

In order to ensure its relevance, NATO needs to adapt to new internal challenges, surroundings, and emerging security threats. This process of adaption is coined "transformation", and focuses on changing the Alliance into a leaner and more relevant military organization in order to ensure relevance by aligning capabilities, organization, and mindsets with the Alliance's ambitions. In short, transformation means equipping and adapting NATO for the 21st century. This transformation is challenging and time-consuming enough on state level. Acquisition of new equipment, changes in large, rigid, and institutionalized military structures, adapting doctrines to new technology and equipment and not least training to handle them are all challenges, where defense spending continuously must be justified to the public, especially in times of austerity.

However, these challenges reach a new dimension at the level of alliance, in which alliance transformation requires sovereign states to pull in the same direction. In the field of defense this has proven to be easier said than done. Not only must a state's defense capabilities, organization and mindsets be aligned with its state ambitions, it must also align the state as such to NATO capabilities, organization, mindsets and strategic concepts. This means that if transformation is to be successful, it must include but also go beyond the purely military dimension (Hamilton 2004, pp. 3-24).

When NATO decided to go out of area instead of out of business¹, its strategic realignment depended on a military transformation. The dependence and need for transformation became even stronger as the Alliance gained more operational experience in terms of lessons identified and lessons learned from the Balkans and then Afghanistan, and indicated that the Alliance needed to rethink how it organized and planned its capabilities and organization to meet new strategic challenges.

One policy initiative addressing the need for transformation innovations is the COE concept. This concept consists of 16 unique multilaterally funded centers (4 in the process of accreditation) that train and educate leaders and specialists from NATO member and partner countries², assist in doctrine development, identify lessons learned³, improve interoperability and capabilities, and test and validate concepts through experimentation. These centers are meant to offer recognized expertise and experience aimed to benefit the Alliance and support the transformation of NATO, while avoiding the duplication of assets, resources and capabilities already present within the NATO command structure.⁴

Coordinated by Allied Command Transformation (ACT) in Norfolk, Virginia in the United States, COEs are considered to be international military organizations. Although the concept is not an entity of the NATO command structure, it constitutes a wider framework supporting NATO command structures (NCS). Designed to complement the Alliance's current resources, COEs cover a wide variety of areas, with each one focusing on a specific field of expertise to enhance NATO capabilities⁵. This means that the concept and the centers inherently enjoy an autonomy that makes the concept suitable for further study. This point will be properly elaborated later in the thesis.

¹ Coined by US Senator Richard Lugar on whether NATO should depart from its traditional mission of territorial defense, which it later did in operations in the Balkans and then to Afghanistan.

² With notable exceptions of one COE (Cold Weather operations), that is nationally funded (meaning no sponsoring states).

³ *Lessons Learned* is a term often employed by military forces and doctrinal commands in which systematic evaluations are used for training, research and development in order to learn from former operational experiences.

⁴ The respective centers are from now on referred to COEs (in plural), whereas the organizational concept is referred to the COE concept. See more on the difference in the chapter three. To avoid any initial confusion, the unit of analysis in this thesis is the COE concept.

⁵ Retrieved from NATO's official COE topic pages
http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_68372.htm

This thesis is about understanding the rationale and the tensions that lie within the COE concept, and how it can be understood in relation to NATO transformation. It employs an institutionalist approach to map different institutional logics of what is perceived as appropriate by key personnel within and affiliated with the concept, and seeks to analyze the concept's roles and rationale, especially in light of transformation of NATO.

1.1 Research Questions

The thesis is organized around two main parts respectively stem from two research questions. The first part is a mapping of the institutional logics that dominate the COE concept, and the second part is an analysis of what roles the COE concept plays, and its strategic intentions, relevance and importance⁶. The two questions are related in the sense that the second uses the findings from question one to assess the concept's rationale, which is used to answer the second research question. The questions are elaborated in the following sections.

Question 1: Identifying institutional logics

There are many studies and analyses on NATO transformation⁷, but in-depth analyses on actual consequences and results of NATO transformation are more rare. NATO Response Force (NRF) is the notable exception that seems to have received significant scholarly attention⁸. Besides this, there seems to be few studies that seek to understand the mechanisms and dynamics of transformational outcomes. In particular, there are no academic analyses on the COE concept at all, or on any of the respective centers within the concept, which means that there are no significant contributions that promote an organized understanding of the COE concept.

As a result, the first part of the research aim is mainly to offer a mapping of the institutional logics and its norms and values that are perceived appropriate on the concept's sources of power, its meaning, and its consequences. This is done in an attempt to identify characteristics

⁶ Institutional logics are based on the theory of logic of appropriateness, emphasizing that *individuals and organizations fulfill identities by following rules and procedures that they imagine as appropriate to the situations they are facing*. The approach is elaborated in chapter two.

⁷ For a selection of these studies and analyses, see Binnendijk & Kugler (2003), Heier (2003), Hamilton (2004), and Gordon (1997)

⁸ See in particular Bialos and Koehl (2005)

of the concept and the tensions within. Given the concept's autonomy, it is fair to expect some competing institutional logics in which different belief systems compete over how to organize and achieve the full potential of the COE concept. The research question is as follows:

Which institutional logics can be identified in regard to how NATO Centers of Excellence are organized?

By using interviews, the empirical evidence is sought to be classified in four institutional logics, organized in the pairs logic of defense sovereignty vs. logic of defense solidarity (level of integration), and logic of defense exclusiveness and level of defense pluralism (level of openness).

Question 2: COE and its role in NATO transformation

The second part of the research focus seeks to place the concept of COE within the broader field of defense transformation in NATO. To answer this part of the thesis, an understanding of the transformation is needed, an understanding that is provided in the final part of this chapter, and then further elaborated throughout the thesis. The first element in the second research question will assess the role of the COE concept in NATO transformation. Furthermore, the conclusions from the institutional logics analyzed in research question one will then be used as a foundation for the concept's rationale, understood as the set of reasons or a logical basis for a course of action or belief. This rationale and key features of the concept will in the final part of the research question be analyzed to assess a potential match with the NATO transformation strategic guidelines 1) national commitments, 2) role specialization, 3) pooling military capabilities, 4) interoperability, and 5) cost-effectiveness, thus enabling us to assess the concept's strategic intention, relevance and importance in regard to NATO transformation. The overall research question is:

2) What role(s) do(es) the COE concept play in the field of defense transformation in NATO, and what is the concept's strategic intention, relevance and importance?

1.2 Central Terms and Concepts

With a topic that intersects political science and military studies, there is an evident need to clarify some expressions and concepts in order to make this thesis' arguments accessible for

all audiences. This section will therefore present a clearer understanding of the terms transformation and doctrine.

Understanding Transformation

Defense transformation is a term that can be classified as an *essentially contested concept*, because it is a “concept the proper use of which inevitably involves endless disputes about their proper uses on the part of their users” (Gallie 1956). The term has long been synonymous with “Revolutions of Military Affairs” (RMA), putting military technology and weapons systems at the heart of what was understood as military transformation (Pettersson 2011, pp. 101-131). The term was however, reintroduced and branded by the George W. Bush (junior) administration to describe a full-scale reorganization of US defense policy and priorities that the Administration perceived to be the biggest threats in the 21st century. Since this, the term has not only highlighted in US Presidential speeches on national security issues, but also been a key element in US, allied and NATO defense policies and strategic concepts (Hamilton 2004, pp. 3-24, Sloan 2008, pp. 38-51). Lately, Hamilton argues that the term has lost much of its original focus in the United States, using it to describe everything from reorganization of the US federal government to reorientation of foreign policy priorities, implying that commentators often equate “transformation” with “change”. One of the most notable scholars on military transformation, Hans Binnendijk (US National Defense University), therefore describes transformation as “the process of creating and harnessing a revolution in military affairs”, a definition that includes new capabilities harnessed to new doctrine and new approaches to organization, training, business practice and even culture (Binnendijk 2002), and that covers the notion that transformation is a timeless phenomenon.

In NATO, there is no *single* "NATO Transformation Agenda". Robert G. Bell argues that it can be said that there are *three*, each began for different reasons at different times, but all are now overlapping and interrelated. The Prague Agenda, initiated by former Secretary General Lord George Robertson in 2002 in response to the "lessons of Kosovo and 9/11", focuses on changes in *capabilities, missions and structures*. The second is the Norfolk Agenda, initiated by former Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer in 2004 is a response to the "lessons of Afghanistan", and focuses on changes in *defense planning, force generation and common funding*. The final “transformation” is the Munich Agenda, initiated by German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder in 2005 in response to the "lessons of the Iraq crisis", and focuses on

changes in NATO's role (or lack thereof) as a venue for genuine transatlantic *strategic consultation and decision-making* (Bell 2005).

This thesis focuses on NATO transformation as *developing capabilities, enhancing missions and reorganizing structures* (the Prague Agenda), with a special emphasis on capabilities and structures. This perspective does not solely focus on RMA as an explanation for transformation, but that transformation rather is characterized from ongoing changes in technology, organizational changes, and in new broad approaches to conflict based on the changing strategic environment accompanying the end of the Cold War.

Explaining Doctrine

Doctrine is a central element since it is at fundamental for the COE concept's mission and purpose, and can be said to be at the very heart of transformation since "doctrine is to planners of military forces what blueprints are to architects". In a review on military doctrine, retired US colonel Harry G. Summers (1992) explains that doctrine is a key determinant of defense planning, especially the planning of future force structure. Understanding the concept of doctrine is therefore important to understand what exactly the COE concept is all about.

In the Allied Joint Doctrine (AJP-01-D)⁹, doctrine is defined as "fundamental principles by which military forces guide their actions in support of objectives. It is authoritative, but requires judgment in application". The principal purpose of doctrine is to provide any Armed Forces with a framework of guidance for the conduct of operations, and is about how those operations should be directed, mounted, commanded, conducted, sustained and recovered. A doctrine is meant to be dynamic and constantly reviewed for relevance; it describes how a force operates, but not why they do what they do, which is the realm of policy.

The purpose of doctrines varies from outlining overarching principles to describing procedures and tactical or technical standardization issues applicable to the lowest levels. Especially the former has NCS as target audience, and is known as capstone or keystone publications. Because of their scope and close relation with policy documents, the development and approval of military doctrine often requires consensus for implementation and execution at the appropriate NATO military command level to ensure that consistency

⁹ The publication is available at <http://www.mod.uk/nr/rdonlyres/c45d7ae8-ed47-40d3-8018-767da039c26a/0/ajp01d.pdf> [accessed March 25th 2012]

with policy is safeguarded. Understanding doctrine is therefore an important element in understanding the COE concept, whose main purpose is to assist in doctrine development.

1.3 Outline of the Thesis

Chapter two (Theoretical Framework) will present the thesis' theoretical foundation. By first introducing the neo-institutionalist approach, an account for a particular sociological view of analyzing institutions is given, namely through institutional logics and "logics of appropriateness". With this in mind, the second part comprises of a discussion of a specific analytical framework developed by Jozef Bátora in his study on the European Defense Agency (EDA) and its competing institutional logics. The principles for his configuration of an analytical framework for EDA are finally utilized to construct an adjusted analytical framework for studying institutional logics within the COE concept.

Chapter three (Methodological Framework) presents the method of procedure for analyzing the concept, primarily by discussing case selection, choice of specific methods for collecting empirical data, and assessing the validity and reliability of these methods and the study as such.

The following, chapter four (Closing the Capabilities Gap), gives a more extensive backdrop for NATO transformation as known today, discussing the central events and documents that are and have been central for transformational efforts in NATO. Especially three summits and belonging documents and concepts are discussed in detail, namely the Washington Summit 1999 (Defense Capabilities Initiative), the Prague Summit 2002 (Prague Capabilities Commitments), and the upcoming Chicago Summit May 2012 (Smart defense concept). A background for the key features and characteristics for the COE concept and an overview of the various COEs is then offered at the end of the chapter.

The most extensive chapter of analysis (chapter five) is reflected by the two research questions, and firstly consists of matching the empirical data with the four institutional logics in my analytical framework. The chapter continues in assessing the COE concept and its role in NATO transformation, assesses whether the concepts plays an identifying, supporting or/and executing role in NATO transformation. By using the findings from research question one, it goes on discussin the concept's strategic intention, relevance and importance in regard to NATO transformation guidelines. The analysis is then wrapped up by presenting the

concept's rationale and role in NATO transformation, based on the findings, analyses, and discussions throughout the thesis.

The last chapter six will finally offer the thesis' concluding remarks, including key theoretical and practical (policy) implications that could and should be looked into in the future.

2 Theoretical Framework

This chapter will first offer a short account of the basic principles and assumptions of new institutionalism, before it explains how institutional logics can be understood. Further, it will review an analysis of EDA's colliding institutional logics by Jozef Bátora (2009), and explain how it has laid the foundation for my own conceptual framework, which is presented in the final section of this chapter.

Judging what is "right" or "rational" behavior is often unclear and ambiguous due to the autonomy of the COE concept, thus making everything potentially justified as "correct behavior" depending on who you ask. Therefore, instead of focusing on the formal agreements of the COE concept, a new institutional approach is employed to identify the logics and perceptions that dominate within the concept, and thus trying to determine the rationale on "what COEs should do, and how to do it". This includes both how things actually are being done and/or how they should be.

Organized in four institutional logics paired together in opposing logics, this theoretical framework emphasize that individuals and organizations fulfill or enact *identities* by following rules and procedures that they imagine as appropriate to the situations that they are facing (Christensen and Røvik 1999, March and Olsen 1989).

Unlike more common international relations positivist theories like realism and (neo)liberalism, new institutional theory seeks to open "the black box" by emphasizing the role of institutions and institutionalization in the understanding of human actions within an organization, social order, or society (March and Olsen 2005, p. 948). More specifically, the thesis' framework will assess potential institutional logics within the concept. The ambition of employing an institutionalist approach is creating a basis for an analytical framework that can make us better understand the very rationale of the concept, and to identify the dominant logics within the concept that might shape and affect decision-making within COEs. These logics are in other words the foundation for understanding the concept's rationale, which is employed to answer research question two.

2.1 Using a New Institutional Perspective

The growing use of the term “new institutionalism” in political science has led to a confusion about what it is, how it differs from other approaches, and how to classify the specific schools that categorize under new institutionalism (Hall and Taylor 1996, pp. 936-957). The new institutionalism perspective used in this thesis is founded on the works of James March and Johan O. Olsen (1984, 1989, 1995, 2002, 2005), in which they argue that political life is not solely organized around policy making, aggregation of predetermined preferences and resources, and finally regulation of behavior and outcomes through external incentives and constraints. Rather, it holds that politics involves a search for collective purpose, direction, meaning and belonging, and that it in contrast with standard equilibrium models holds that history is inefficient because it assumes that institutions reach a unique organizational form conditional on current functional and normative circumstances, and thus independent of their historical path (Olsen 2007b).

Since I employ new institutionalism in this thesis, the “old” one also deserves some words before going in-depth on what new institutionalism is. In the old institutionalism, issues of influence, coalitions, and competing values were central, along with power and informal structures (Clark 1994, Clark 1972, Selznick 1949, Selznick 1957). The new institutionalism on the other hand, has its emphasis on legitimacy, the embeddedness of organizational fields, and the centrality of classification, and schema (DiMaggio and Powell 1983, Meyer and Rowan 1977, Greenwood and Hinings 1996, p. 1022). It also goes further and tries to determine if any assumed differences exist, and if so in what ways those alternative ways of organizing political life differ, and what difference this makes for the performance of political systems (Peters 2005, Weaver and Rockman 1993, Von Mettenheim 1996), with a particular focus on sanctions and change that alternative sources of legitimacy lead to.

In an article by Hall and Taylor, (1996, pp. 936-937) the authors distinguish between three different analytical approaches where all of them call themselves “new institutionalism”. These three schools of thought are labeled historical institutionalism, rational choice institutionalism and sociological institutionalism. Despite all of them are trying to explain the role that institutions play in the determination of political outcomes, they offer different foci on how to construe the relationship between institutions and behavior and how to explain the process whereby institutions originate and change.

The historical perspective focuses on how previous choices affect the prospects for subsequent policy outcomes, where the past plays an important role in shaping and constraining actors at a later time (Pierson 2004). Rational choice institutionalism on the other hand has a more functional point of view, and offers a *calculus* approach in which the basic assumption is that individuals adhere to calculated patterns of behavior (logic of consequences). Deviation will in this perspective assumed to make the individual worse off than will adherence, thus making that the more an institution contributes to the resolution of collective action dilemmas or the more gains from exchange it makes possible, the more robust it will be (Hall and Taylor 1996, p. 940). The final approach is the sociological institutionalism that arose primarily within the subfield of organization theory, coined normative institutionalism by Peters (2005, p. 19). This school of institutionalism is the stark contrast to the school of rational choice institutionalism, in the sense that sociological institutionalism is guided by norms and values, rather than rules and incentives (rational choice) or history (historical institutionalism). This thesis will continue on focusing on institutional logics, which is a central theme in the school of sociological institutionalism.

2.1.1 Institutional Logics

The specific sociological institutionalist approach used in this thesis places a strong emphasis on norms and values of institutions as a means of understanding how they function and how they determine individual behavior (Peters 2005, p. 19). One of the broad types of logics of action in formal organizations is the *logic of appropriateness*, defined by March ((1994, p. 57) by emphasizing that *individuals and organizations fulfill identities by following rules and procedures that they imagine as appropriate to the situations they are facing*. It argues that institutions generate and implement prescriptions that define how the “game” has to be played: who is legitimate to participate, what are the acceptable agendas, which sanctions to apply in case of deviations as well as the process by which changes should occur (Thoenig 2003). This approach constitutes the sociological branch of March and Olsen’s school of new institutionalism, namely that institutions are influenced by what its participants perceive as appropriate. These logics of appropriateness serve as perspectives on human action and means to act according to the institutionalized practices of a collectively and mutual understanding of what is true, reasonable, natural, right, and good (Olsen 2007b, p. 3).

March and Olsen emphasize a view based on a logic of appropriateness but see history as inefficient, and which is an approach that effectively is used to understand the dynamics and mechanisms within the COE concept. In this perspective, the rules, norms, institutions, and identities that drive human action are seen as developing in a way that cannot be predicted from prior environmental conditions (March and Olsen 2005, p. 958), but rather coevolve in the worlds in which they act and engage in. Olsen continues by noting that actors “may struggle with how to classify themselves and others -who they are, and what they are- and what the classifications imply in a specific situation”.

The approach stresses individual identities that through a process of individualization and socialization, an actor voluntarily chooses self-imposed and –selected roles and rules and where obligations, responsibilities and commitment are learned and followed, not chosen (Christensen and Røvik 1999, pp. 326-327). This, institutional identities are based on the development of individual identities, and thereby creating similar attitudes, norms and values, and thus important for defining attitudes and activities (Selznick 1957). It is rules that define attitudes and activities, and both formal and informal rules apply in the theory of logic of appropriateness. These rules become relevant according to the different situations (March 1994, pp. 63, 68, Christensen and Røvik 1999, p. 326).

The approach also implies that actors have multiple identities or a repertoire of identities therefore also multiple rule options in different situations, and can be particularly challenging when several institutions structured according to different principles and rules prove competing analyses and behavioral logics for the same area of action (Olsen 2007b, p. 6). This applies for the case of the COE concept, in which its autonomous role to organize itself can prescribe different identities, and thus institutional logics. The approach is therefore chosen in an attempt to create some expected institutional logics, and thus identifying which identities and rules that seems appropriate within the COE concept. This is a challenging task since identities and logics, as Christensen and Røvik (1999, pp. 329-331) argues, are often complex, competing or ambiguous. This is one of the weaknesses of the theory, since it does not describe how to deal with these potential ambiguities and complexities. Nevertheless, by using the approach and the assumptions and variables that follow, a conceptual framework can be constructed for analyzing the COE concept by identifying the rules and identities through institutional logics. This will as a result further the understanding of the concept’s rationale, and better enable us to answer research question two.

2.2 Towards a Conceptual Framework for Understanding the COE Concept

The principles for one specific configuration for understanding EDA are utilized to construct an adjusted analytical framework for studying institutional logics within the COE concept. In this respect, there are arguably some diverging logics concerning basic notions of what level of integration in the defense sector is appropriate for NATO, what coordination mechanisms that should apply, and who should participate in what initiatives; the same institutional dynamics that have been found in the case of EDA (see Bátorá 2009, Keohane 2004, Keohane and Valasek 2008, Witney 2008).

Bátorá's framework and analysis of EDA in the article "European Defense Agency: A Flashpoint of Institutional Logics" (2009) is specifically of interest to this study of COE concept, because the two organizational entities can be said to be caught in a crossfire of interests and appropriate levels of integration and openness. In his article, Bátorá investigates what kind of defense integration in the EU that is appropriate, by using EDA as a case. The agency, which has been one of the key elements in efforts to bring about more coherence and integration in defense cooperation among the union's member states, has been working in a policy environment featuring competing visions of appropriate institutional arrangements – or institutional logics – in regard to the political order of European Union (EU) defense. Bátorá therefore argues that by mapping out the colliding logics and discussing how they have been playing out in EDA, the findings and discussions can be helpful in identifying an emerging political order of EU defense.

Using Bátorá's framework is useful because it is a fruitful framework for identifying different logics, and hence understanding what kind of integration (if any) the COE concept is all about. Assuming that the concept share the same key elements as EDA concerning coherence and integration in defense cooperation among NATO's member states, a similar framework of competing institutional logics could also prove to helpful in identifying developments within NATO transformation. Secondly, identifying institutional logics within the COE concept would be helpful in answering the second research question of this thesis, namely assessing whether the institutional logics are coherent with the strategic logic that is guiding NATO transformation.

A key question that applies for EDA as it does with the COE concept is how and what loyalties one can map within the two concepts, and what level of integration they represent. As Bátorá points out, integration in the field of political analysis evolves around three dimensions: a) the level of integration of a community including the principles for interactions within it; b) the notion of who are legitimate participants in a particular sphere of political life or political community; and c) notions of what coordination mechanisms and instruments are to be applied (Olsen 2007a, pp. 19-27, Bátorá 2009). By constructing four pairs of competing logics that address these dimensions, he thus manages to place EDA within these pairs to classify and understand the agency.

The first dimension that Bátorá folds out is the level of integration of a community, including the principles for interactions within it. Bátorá operationalizes the dimension by investigating the principles that govern the relationships between EDA and its institutional surroundings. The second dimension focuses on the participants, in other words which actors that EDA works for and with, for example allies, partnership countries, industry, research and development, other institutions and actors. The third and final dimension looks more specifically at coordination mechanisms, and can be explored by a focus on actual organizational arrangements and rules regulating interactions within the policy field in which EDA operates.



Figure 1 Source: Bátorá’s conceptual framework for assessing EDA (2009)

Bátorá uses these three dimensions to identify the following 8 (4 competing pairs) logics (figure 1), and is helpful in constructing a conceptual framework that can be applied for the COE concept. Although his framework lays the foundation from my analytical design, the

logics in this thesis will not organize under the three dimensions as Bátorá does. Instead, the dimensions are used to identify relevant empirical indicators that constitute the conceptual framework of four logics.

The remains of this chapter will present these four institutional logics and their respective empirical expectations that are adjusted to this thesis' concept. The institutional logics are finally summarized in Table 1 at the end of this chapter, and sought to constitute the concept's rationale.

2.2.1 Constructing Institutional Logics for COEs

Specifying and discussing how these institutional logics within the COE concept are to be used and analyzed, is important. The four institutional logics are meant as Weberian ideal types, used to stress certain elements common to most cases of a given phenomenon. Ideal types do not refer to "perfect types", but rather as idea-constructs that help put a socially unorganized reality into a system of order of understanding. Institutional logics constitute the four "ideal types", and are a way of categorizing broad belief systems that arguably shape cognition and behavior of actors. Given the lack of studies on the COE concept, the logics will be used for a mapping that will contribute to a more structured understanding of this particular phenomenon, which consequently will constitute the concept's rationale, which is further used as a basis to answer the second research question.

The four logics are organized in two pairs, where two and two are contrasting each other. The logics are nevertheless not mutually exclusive in the sense that picking one does not necessarily mean excluding the other. Rather, the opposing pairs of logics will be used to understand the dynamics and nuances of the concept. This means that there are no expectations that there is a right and wrong logic, but that the findings will help to organize the empirical findings to understand the concept's features and characteristics, and that the concept is not exclusively in one or two particular logics.

The first and most obvious organizational feature that is expected to trigger competing institutional logics is that the concept's autonomy from *both* national military (or civilian) command structures as well as the NCS. Had the concept been organized and funded by state command structures, the expectation would be that state interest and sovereignty would be at the center of the concept's rationale and perceived meaning. Had the concept been organized

and funded by NCS however, one could expect the opposite, namely that NATO (shared) interests and solidarity would be at the very heart of the concept. Having neither of these configurations for COE, but instead a solution in the middle where COEs are operated by clusters of states, the rationale for running and maintaining these centers become all the more interesting to study since they seem to be stuck in the middle of *a logic of defense sovereignty and a logic of defense solidarity* (level of integration). The notion that the COE concept is arguably caught in the crossfire between these two is further evident that NATO (mainly through ACT) seems to have a significant role in accrediting and coordinating COE efforts. These elements of regulation from NATO is in stark contrast to an opposing feature of the concept, namely that a framework state and eventual supporting states are supposed to pay for each center, provide the necessary resources and fill positions with their personnel. Can the empirical evidence prove in what direction loyalty is directed?

The other organizational feature of COEs is the fact that the centers are encouraged to establish relationships with non-NATO states and other external entities (international organizations, industry, private companies, schools, universities, research institutes, etc). The answer to how much or how many partners the respective COEs that is appropriate, and how formalized this cooperation should be, is nevertheless an open question that is up to each center. Considering the open-ended position that the concept has in regard to relationships, it is somewhere between a *logic of defense exclusiveness and a logic of defense pluralism* (level of openness). The former logic implies that COEs, although encouraged, include none/few external entities and states, meaning that “COE is for and by NATO”, whereas the latter indicate the opposite, in which it is perceived natural to include non-NATO states and other external entities.

In terms of the institutional logics’ theoretical foundation, the logics on sovereignty (logic 1) and exclusiveness (logic 3) are theoretically founded in a hundred year old founding thought within political science and political sociology formulated by Max Weber, that the state as an institution can be defined as a monopoly of legitimate use of force (Weber 1965). This monopoly is the key characteristic of the modern state, and requires clear territorial boundaries for sovereignty, and consequently exclusive control on everything within it. This laid the foundation for the modern armed forces, which amongst other has the characteristics that it was completely led from the state, and that the military was distinguished and separated from the civil society (Matlary and Østerud 2005, pp. 11-32). Having this in mind, the

theoretical foundation for these logics is that the concept's logics first of all is defined by national interest and the exclusive prerogative of the state, and that the ideal defense integrity is achieved through military self-sufficiency and self-reliance (logic 1). For logic 3 the theoretical foundation is simply that COE is for and by NATO, thus stressing clear boundaries for whom to include.

The two other logics on solidarity and pluralism (logic 2 and 4) however, are theoretically founded in a new theoretical strand that finds that elements of security and armed forces are increasingly being internationalized and privatized. The reasons for this as Østerud and Matlary argue, are changed patterns of risk and threat, and a shift in the technological and economic context (ibid). Moskos, Williams and Segal (2000) concludes that the traditional armed forces have developed into "a post-modern military", amongst others represented through organizational change like tighter links between military and civilian spheres, and a multinational integration of military and through international military organizations. Having this in mind, the theoretical foundation for logic 2 and 4 is that COE's logic is defined by strong relations to NATO and that COE as a common endeavor among states, achieve security through sharing of military resources and mutual reliance (logic 2), and that COE is an arena for all relevant actors (logic 4).

The following sections will now elaborate on the four logics, organized in pairs of defense sovereignty vs. defense solidarity and defense exclusiveness vs. defense pluralism. The four logics are numbered 1-4, with indicators organized and numbered under each respective logic (i.e., 1.1, 1.2). A complete summary of all logics and indicators are found at the end of this chapter.

Defense sovereignty (logic 1) vs. defense solidarity (logic 2)

Concerning the logic of defense sovereignty and logic of defense solidarity, a set of empirical assumptions will serve as indicators for this particular case study. In the logic of defense sovereignty, the empirical expectations are 1.1) a primacy of state interests in governing COE, 1.2) a governing body and principles played out by officers/eq that act on behalf of their state interests, and 1.3) requests for support (RFS) from NATO are given less priority. On the other hand, a logic of defence solidarity consequently leads us to assume 2.1) primacy of NATO needs and interests in running COE, 2.2) subject matter experts that constitute governing body

and principles in which military (operational) professional needs are the top priority, and 2.3) requests for support from NATO are given high priority.

First of all, a logic of sovereignty would imply that COE as a concept and the specific centers in general would be fully operated by the framework and supporting state. This means that the centers would have a “bottom-up” approach to its governing structures with a primacy of state negotiations, and thus enjoy a high degree of autonomy from NCS. In terms of the logic of solidarity on the other hand, the empirical evidence will support the opposite; COE would then be strongly influenced by NCS, and thus have strong elements of supranational regulation and steering. As opposed to the former logic, COE would hence have a low degree of autonomy in regard to NCS.

Secondly, the empirical expectations in the logic of sovereignty would therefore be a primacy of state interests in governing COE, and a governing body and principles played out by officers/eq. that act on behalf of their state interests. In the other logic, namely supranational regulation, the empirical will show a primacy of NATO needs and interests in the running of COE, with subject matter experts and NATO interests that dominate the program of work on what the respective COEs should work on.

The last empirical expectations are related to what is called RFS and to the “jointness” of defense research and development programs. RFS are specific needs that NATO ACT wants a specific COE to produce for NATO. In this respect, they function as “orders” that they want COE to produce. In regard to the two logics, the expectations are that the logic of sovereignty implies that these requests for RFS are not given priority when and if state interests have a higher priority, whilst the opposing logic implies that RFS are given high priority, regardless of state interest.

Defense exclusiveness (logic 3) vs. defense pluralism (logic 4)

Also in regard to the logic of defense exclusiveness and logic of defense pluralism, a set of expected empirical assumptions that would serve as indicators will be presented. For the logic of defense exclusiveness, these are 3.1) no room for strategic partnerships with states or international organizations beyond NATO, 3.2) little to none civil-military cooperation with other external entities (industry, private companies, schools, universities, research institutes, etc.), and 3.3) exclusive information sharing. In the opposing logic, expectations are 4.1)

strategic partnerships with states or international organizations are highly esteemed, 4.2) high degree of civil-military cooperation with other external entities, and 4.3) effectiveness and willingness of information sharing.

The first indicator has to do with appropriate extent COEs cooperate through strategic partnerships with other states than NATO members, and other international organizations. A strategic partnership is understood as a formalized cooperation between a COE and the partner, and can materialize in form of a the partner becoming a supporting state in a COE, that a COE and the partner works together on a specific project, or simply that the partner is given access to seminars, courses, etc. that are offered at a COE. The most obvious example of an international organization would be the European Union, and is specifically mentioned in the chapter on analysis. In the opposing logic, the difference between defense exclusiveness and pluralism is obvious; there is no room for partners in the logic of exclusiveness, whereas it is highly esteemed in the opposing logic. One important encouragement stated in the founding NATO Military Committee (MC) document for the COE concept states that

“[r]elationships between COE and Partnership for Peace (PfP) Nations (including Russia and Ukraine) and Mediterranean Dialogue countries are encouraged. In the context of the Enhanced and More Operational Partnership (EMOP), a COE should make use of ongoing developments, in particular in the Training Education Enhancement Program (TEEP), which includes PfP Advanced Distributed Learning and Simulation and co-operation with PfP Training Centres.” (NATO 2003)¹⁰

The question however, is what level and intensity of partnerships that are perceived as appropriate within the COE concept.

The second indicator is concerned with the degree of civil-military cooperation within the COE concept. This cooperation is limited to actors in industry, private companies, schools, universities, research institutes, etc. The diversity of actors that can organize under an eventual civil-military cooperation is high, meaning that it is demanding to define what (or who) cooperation that is appropriate. In this thesis, all mentioning of the actors mentioned

¹⁰ The MC-document is NATO Unclassified (not releasable to the public), but the concept is thoroughly discussed in an open presentation by ACT Transformation Network Branch (TNB), available at <https://transnet.act.nato.int/WISE/COE/ENSEC/MOU1/MOUConfere/ACTBriefs/IntrotoCOE> [accessed March 26th 2012]. The actual MC-document was also publicly available on the Internet for a long while, but was later removed.

above will classify as civil-military cooperation, given that the cooperation is somewhat organized and/or formalized. As with the former indicator, civil-military cooperation would be inappropriate according to a logic of exclusiveness, as opposed to a logic of pluralism where civil-military cooperation would indeed be highly esteemed.

The third and final indicator deals with the effectiveness and willingness of information sharing within and beyond the concept of COE, and this aspect looks at the dispersion of information between different actors that are involved in the COE concept. The indicator must be assessed in two respects, first how COE products (like assessments, reports, papers, etc.) are shared within NATO, and second the degree of information sharing between respective COE involved states and strategic or civil-military partner (see the two former indicators). The first respect looks at whether COE outcomes are openly published and shared with other NATO members that are not formally or financially supporting a given COE. If the COE product is perceived as exclusive and only shared between the framework and supporting states, this would be consistent with a logic of exclusiveness, and the other way around if it is perceived as natural for a COE to share its products to the Alliance as whole, including its respective members. Second, this indicator can also be measured on the flow of information between NATO-members that support a COE and non-NATO partners of that specific COE. In this case, information would be perceived as important to share beyond NATO members in the logic of defense pluralism, and the opposite for a logic of defense exclusiveness.

2.2.2 Mapping Competing Logics Within the COE Concept

Table 1 summarizes the four competing logics that will be used in analyzing NATO COEs. It shows what theoretical foundation that lies behind each of the four logics, and more importantly states the indicators that will be used in the actual analysis of COE in chapter five. It is again important to stress that *sovereignty vs. solidarity* and *exclusiveness vs. pluralism* are not dichotomies, meaning that the pairs are not jointly exhaustive and mutually exclusive. Instead they are used as constructs, in order to summarize observations about things that cannot be observed directly, and thus helping us to organize and better understand the empirical evidence of the COE concept.

Table 1: A conceptual framework for NATO Centers of Excellence

Institutional logic	Theoretical foundation	Empirical expectations
Logic of defense sovereignty	<p>-COE's logic defined by national interest</p> <p>-COE as an exclusive prerogative of the state, defense integrity achieved through military self-sufficiency and self-reliance</p>	<p>1.1 primacy of state interests in governing COE</p> <p>1.2 a governing body and principles played out by officers/eq. that act on behalf of their state interests</p> <p>1.3 RFS are given less priority</p>
VS.		
Logic of defense solidarity	<p>-COE's logic is defined by strong relations to NATO</p> <p>- COE as a common endeavor among states, security achieved through sharing of military resources and mutual reliance</p>	<p>2.1 primacy of NATO needs and interests in governing COE</p> <p>2.2 subject matter experts constitute governing body and principles in which military professional needs is of top priority</p> <p>2.3 RFS are of high priority</p>
-and-		
Logic of defense exclusiveness	COE for and by NATO	<p>3.1 no room for strategic partnerships with states or international organizations beyond NATO</p> <p>3.2 little to none civil-military cooperation with other external entities (industry, private companies, schools, universities, research institutes, etc.)</p> <p>3.3 restrictive and unwilling information sharing</p>
VS.		
Logic of defense pluralism	COE an arena for all relevant actors	<p>4.1 Strategic partnerships with states or international organizations beyond NATO are highly esteemed</p> <p>4.2 High degree of civil-military cooperation with other external entities (industry, private companies, schools, universities, research institutes, etc.)</p> <p>4.3 Effective and willing information sharing</p>

3 Methodological Framework

The methodological framework consists of a case study strategy, in which I justify selecting the NATO Centers of Excellence concept in itself as the case. Furthermore, the chapter discusses how and why a qualitative approach is chosen, before it sums up the chapter by discussing the strengths and weaknesses of the methodological framework and study as such.

3.1 Case Study Research as Strategy

The overall theme of this thesis is transformation in NATO, which is a complex and vast field of study. In handling this scope and complexity, a case study research strategy is a natural choice because it seeks to explain a larger (but not indefinite) universe by analyzing certain units within it. This applies for this thesis, in which COE as a concept is chosen as a case study, and placed within the “bigger picture” of transformation. Robert K. Yin (1984, p. 23) defines the case study research method as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. The phenomenon that is at the heart of this study is obviously the concept of NATO Centers of Excellence, and why and how I treat this concept in this thesis is discussed in the following sections.

3.1.1 Picking Centers of Excellence as Study Object

NATO Centers of Excellence is an interesting study object for many reasons. First of all, since the specific COEs are not part of the NCS, the framework and supporting states basically have freedom to cooperate with whom they want, and at the level of integration and openness that is most helpful for the respective COE’s mission and goals. For example, if a COE considers cooperating with a PfP-country as advantageous for its center, there are no mechanisms that NATO could stop them from that. That implies, for example, that cooperation between EU and NATO is possible within the framework of COEs without any states blocking inter-institutional cooperation at political level (Quinlan 2007, pp. 63-68) ¹¹.

¹¹ Particularly the Cyprus conflict has been an challenge for cooperation between EU and NATO, since Greece (in EU) and Turkey (in NATO) seem to block inter-institutional cooperation.

This freedom for COEs to organize themselves and include whomever they want in their organizations does not only include international institutions like the EU and other non-NATO partners; the centers are also encouraged to include whatever research, development, academic institutions, etc. that a COE sees suitable. This autonomy is therefore one very important motivation for studying this concept.

Secondly, the concept supposedly complies with Smart Defense principles of cost-effective and multilateral solutions¹². COEs is a multilateral organizational form¹³, in which supporting states are expected to share costs, and contribute with necessary resources that will decrease duplication of assets and production in NATO, while at the same time increase effective use of resources. Mapping competing logics and tensions within this type of concept is therefore useful to understanding the rationale and dynamics of similar multilateral defense concepts.

Thirdly, the COE network comprises of around 600 subject matter experts that are in the lead on their topics relevant to NATO. The ambition that these experts are sought to be used more effectively for NATO, but still organizing them outside the NCS, raises interesting policy implications as for how this could and should be done.

Fourth and final, the COE concept serves as a potential arena for state interests in several ways. This fourth potential comprises of three concrete potentials for state interest. First of all, states arguably have “agenda-setting power” by hosting or supporting a COE, meaning that experts work on the topics that are important for the states that are represented in the steering committee. Secondly, although not in the battlefields, COE is also an actual contribution to the burden sharing within the Alliance; having a NATO-flag on national soil is still something that seems to be considered as valuable, perhaps especially in newer Alliance member states in particular. Thirdly, supporting states (or eventually states that send a liaison-officer/eq.) can also promote their bilateral and military interests by supporting COEs. Bilateral in the sense that they can find out what is “going on” and report back home, and military in the sense that they have a point of contact to what is perhaps a world leading competence center for whatever field the respective COE is operating within.

Indeed, the very concept of COE seems to be an innovation in regard to organizing military units, and seems to be a direct result of NATO transformational effort. This gives a practical

¹² See background for Smart Defense in section 4.1.3

¹³ There is one notable exception: the Norwegian COE for Cold Weather Operations. This center has no formal supporting states, but does indeed have close ties with other states.

reason to pick the concept as study object, because this multilateral approach of organizing and developing military capabilities could say something about the practical dynamics and implications of the policy initiatives deriving from NATO transformational efforts. As Ulriksen argues, economic, political and military factors have given way for what he calls integration by default (decentralized military integration), in the sense that developments in NATO consists of a web of cooperative projects, each with its own dynamics and motivation, rather than a planned and controlled process above state level (Ulriksen 2007a). Examining COE as a part of this web and understanding how it operates is therefore ‘important for answering my two research questions.

There are also important methodological aspects that make the COE concept “researchable”. The first one is that COE is a concept that seems more or less open to the public. This makes the concept and its founding documents and principles relatively easy to find. It is also a feature in NATO that both NATO ACT and involved states seems to be proud of – and it is hence not a problem getting in touch with people that want to share their information and perceptions regarding COEs. This might lead to an “eagerness” that could cause biased informants, but this is not perceived as a significant challenge.

Last but not least, with its 16 different COEs (+ 4 waiting for accreditation) and their belonging subject matter areas, the concept is an exciting unit of analysis, but it nevertheless raises some methodological issues of defining and choosing units and cases in this study, something which the next section of this chapter will discuss.

3.1.2 Selecting COE as Case

Case studies in general allow a researcher to achieve high levels of conceptual validity, or to identify and measure the indicators that best represent the theoretical aspects the researcher intends to measure (George and Bennett 2005, p. 19). This is indeed the case for studying the concept of COE – it allows in-depth analysis that secures the conceptual validity and secures the flexibility to identify and measure the indicators outlined in the former chapter. The unit of analysis is therefore the COE concept in itself. The concept is regulated through the MC-document MCM-236-03 from December 2003 (NATO 2003), which defines it as a state or multinationally sponsored entity that offers recognized expertise and experience to the benefit of the Alliance, above all in support of transformation. It is also to provide opportunities to

enhance education and training, to improve interoperability and capabilities, to assist in doctrine development and/or to test and validate concepts through experimentation.

There are 16 specific COEs (+ 4 waiting for accreditation) at the moment (April 2012), and each one has its own subject matter area. One could argue that selecting one or more specific COEs as unit of analysis could offer both a higher internal and external validity. Nevertheless, each center is fundamentally different in terms of personnel/state composition, subject matter, size, culture and specific outcome and focus. Studying some specific centers would therefore give a higher level of internal validity, but since it might not be comparable to other centers, or be fully indicative of COE as concept, it would be problematic in answering the research questions. Furthermore, understanding the concept as such is a constructive start to make a fertile ground for further research of its constituents.

A specific COE is not part of the NATO command structure, but forms part of a wider framework that is supposed to support NCS. Hence, it is the COE as a concept that is the unit of analysis, limiting my study to the network of specific COEs and the supporting role of ACT.

3.2 A Qualitative Approach

Taken the theoretical framework into consideration, this study is a qualitative one with a case study approach. Gerring (2007, p. 20) defines a case study as “*the intensive study of a single case where the purpose of that study is – at least in part – to shed light on a larger class of cases (a population)*”. This approach is by far the most fruitful way to go in order to gather empirical evidence that answer my research questions in a satisfactory manner, particularly to map the different institutional logics in regard to research question one, and assessing whether the findings, which are collected through interviews, can be related to NATO transformational efforts.

3.2.1 Interviews

I have primarily interviewed key personnel that have, or have had, a connection to the COE concept or NATO as such, including personnel that have a link to ACT, the NATO Headquarters (HQ) in Brussels, senior officials and state representatives in a selection of

COEs¹⁴. The people I've interviewed have primarily been selected through snowball sampling, which is a method for selection that is a special nonprobability method used when the desired sample characteristic (like affiliation, knowledge, or connection to the COE concept) is rare or hard to gain access to. It may be difficult or cost prohibitive to locate respondents in these situations, and sampling relies on referrals from initial subjects to generate additional subjects, and while this technique can dramatically lower search costs, it comes at the expense of introducing bias because the technique itself reduces the likelihood that the sample will represent a good cross section from the population (Biernacki and Waldorf 1981, pp. 141-163).

In this respect, the method of sampling has led to majority of Norwegian officers/personnel. Nevertheless, unless the officers/personnel were asked about specific Norwegian points of view, they seemed to be wearing their "NATO flag" on their mental uniform. That meant that they always answered the questions as if they were talking about entire NATO or a specific center, rather than just from a Norwegian angle. That could reduce selection bias, but never entirely. This study therefore has to take into consideration a majority of Norwegian officers and personnel.

Some data had to be collected online, in which the informants filled out a semi-structured questionnaire sent by e-mail that was in some cases followed up with an informal telephone interview. E-mail questionnaires are never optimal compared to personal interviews, but given the circumstances it was either questionnaires or nothing at all. Questionnaires were therefore chosen, well aware of the possible weaknesses that follow this solution for data collection.

The personal interviews were all conducted in Oslo with a semi-structured interview guide¹⁵. Because of the informant's diverse background and institutional affiliations, each guide was adapted to each person. Nevertheless, an illustrative guide for what topics that were addressed in all interviews is found in appendix B.

The personal interviews were conducted in Norwegian, and the quotes in this thesis have therefore been translated to English. The e-mail questionnaires were both in English and

¹⁴ A complete list over respondents is found in Appendix A

¹⁵ Each guide was adjusted to each of the informants background and experiences, but an illustrative example is presented in Appendix B

Norwegian, depending on the informants' nationality. The project has been approved by the Norwegian Social Sciences Data Services (Data Protection Official) with project number 28668 for any further reference.

3.2.2 Pattern Matching

The concept of pattern matching means that an “expected pattern” will be used for specifications of the hypothesis that allow for a rigorous comparison with an “observed pattern” of values of variables in a test. The term “pattern identification” as a characteristic of qualitative analysis which Campbell defines as holistic (i.e., analyzing the pattern) rather than atomistic (i.e., analyzing its constituents) (Campbell 1966, Campbell 1975). Campbell argued that the single case study design could provide for a strong test of theory if an entire set of expectations deduced from that theory (which together would constitute an “expected pattern”) could be shown to be true in that case, an approach that he called “configurationally”. This is an approach that Yin discusses as the most desirable analytic strategy in case study research, and argues that for an independent variables design, one should formulate different expected patterns of independent variables, each based on a different and mutually exclusive theory and that the ambition of the study would be to determine which of the rival patterns has the largest overlap with the observed one (Hak and Dul 2009, Yin 1984).

The institutional logics that were presented in the chapter presenting the theoretical framework for this thesis thus represent an expected pattern. The thesis uses the empirical evidence carried primarily through interviews as discussed in the former section to match *observed* data with the *expected* pattern, in which the results will be used to discuss whether the expected and observed patterns overlap, and what conclusions that can be drawn from this.

3.3 Validity and Reliability of this Study

Validity and reliability are two key criteria for quality in scholarly work, and it is therefore important to assess methodological strengths and weaknesses along the way. Validity is often divided in two parts; internal and external validity. While internal validity is concerned about making valid descriptive and causal inferences (Keohane et al. 1994, p. 236), external validity

is more concerned about generalization from the selection to a broader population, or other situations of times (Lund 2002, pp. 79-123). Reliability on the other hand, is whether the results are consistent over time or several measurements. The thesis' scholarly quality will in this section be discussed according to these three elements in the following sections.

Given the employed research strategy of a case study, the thesis achieves a high score of internal validity because the approach offers rich empirical evidence based on thick descriptions. The method of semi-structure interviewing furthermore gives the researcher the flexibility to go in-depth on the issues and topics that are important for the study. Assuming institutional logics and adjusting empirical expectations to my study, requires an evaluation of the measures that followed from the respective logics. This type of evaluation is called *construct validity*, also coined nomological validity. The underlying idea of construct/nomological validity is that scores that can validly be claimed to measure a systematized concept, should fit well-established expectations that involve this concept (Adcock and Collier 2001, pp. 529-546). In regard to this type of validity, the empirical expectations seems to match the evidence well, and achieving construct validity was therefore not considered a challenge throughout the process of this thesis. Considering the substantial time used to prepare the data collection with both scholars and practitioners, construct validity is expected to be at a satisfactory level.

The thesis' external validity is not as strong as the internal validity. Since the study's focus is on one case only, and not cross-case comparison, the study suffers problems of representativeness because it includes, by definition, only a small number of cases of some more general phenomenon (also referred to as the small-N problem) (Gerring 2007, p. 43). It is also essential that there is only *one* COE concept, and that the study thus studies "the whole population" of COE concepts – and thus not making it further subject to generalization. This does not automatically mean low external validity, as George & Bennett argue when coining contingent generalization (George and Bennett 2005, pp. 25-36). This means that this study's conclusions can be generalized to a defined scope or domain, e.g. multilateral defense projects (e.g, specific Smart Defense projects) or other similar international military organizations like the COE concept.

In terms of reliability, all data collection was done according to qualitative principles, and most interviews were conducted personally, thus making the level of reliability discussable. Since my sources are open, they will probably provide the same points and perspectives if

they were asked again (test re-test principle). If another researcher would assess the empirical evidence, it could still lead to other conclusions due to differing subjective interpretations of the material (called inter-subjectivity). However, by reviewing the evidence, chances for this are perceived as small since the empirical evidence seems to be quite clear. One significant weakness to this study's and the theory of logic of appropriateness' reliability is however the temporal dimension. Since the findings are subject to the context, they cannot be expected to be the same if collected in another context. This means that if the same study were to be repeated in ten years from now, the results would therefore probably be quite different. This potential weakness is further discussed in the concluding chapter.

4 Closing the Capabilities Gap

To understand the emerging need for transformation after the Cold War, and consequently the context of the COE concept, this chapter will offer a backdrop of some key NATO events and documents that have led to the developments in and around NATO that I address in this thesis. First of all it will first discuss NATO's security context after the Cold War, and what challenges NATO faced after the supposed fall of the bipolar world order. I will then discuss how key documents like the Defense Capabilities Initiative (DCI) forged at the Washington Summit 1999, and the follow-up Prague Capabilities Commitment (PCC) agreed upon at the Prague Summit 2002, have articulated the need for, and led the way to transformation and modernization in NATO, consequently leading to the establishment of COEs. Some words will also be devoted to the contemporary transformational challenges ahead of the Chicago Summit in 2012.

The second part of this chapter will try to account for what COEs are in practice. It will present key facts and figures on how they are organized, what activities they offer, participating and/or funding states, and other features that can offer insights in this relatively new NATO concept.

4.1 Ensuring Relevance Through Transformation

NATO's framework has changed drastically since the Cold War as it has tried to adjust itself to a new security context, and thereby new military challenges. In the wake of the end of the Cold War, NATO entered into an identity crisis, which consequently led to several steps of transformations in terms of vision and goals, military capacity, and geographical field of operations in order to adapt itself to its new era and context (Græger 2009).

Change and transformation in NATO has been determined by political ambitions and operational experiences after the Cold War, and Græger (2009) argues that the operational experiences came from the experiences gained during the Balkan wars in the 90s. After the end of the Cold War when NATO politically adopted a new Strategic Concept (1991), a new political direction that adjusted NATO's threat perception from a fear of Russian intervention on European soil, to "diverse and multi-directional risks". As a result, budgets, strategic planning, and force and command structures went through a series of reforms that signaled

the start of NATO transformation after the Cold War. From an operational perspective the Balkan operations made alliance members realize that the political context it was operating within was in rapid change. Apart from the fact that these were the first operations ever executed under the NATO flag, the operations also sent NATO into a completely new business, namely the business of “out-of-area”-operations.

The changes and experiences after the 90’s proved and accentuated that closing the gap between American and European defense capabilities was needed to improve NATO’s ability not only to fulfill Article 5 for collective defense, but also to meet emerging security challenges. One of the capabilities gap, as Ulriksen points out, was that European armies since Bosnia had focused doctrinal efforts and acquired substantial skills in peacekeeping and stabilization operations – while they have not had any significant developments on its own war-fighting doctrine – or even reflected whether Europe really needs such a doctrine (Ulriksen 2007b). A high-intensity NATO-operation run independently by European allies was therefore an important ambition for further transformation efforts articulated in the DCI from 1999.

Furthermore, 9/11 further widened the gap between European and US forces, as many European states were neither able nor willing to carry through out-of-area operations in the same full strength as the Americans. These two eras of operational experiences must be seen in context and as the *raison d’être* for the decisions and initiatives that are presented in the next sections.

4.1.1 Washington Summit 1999: Defense Capabilities Initiative

At the summit in Washington D.C. April 1999, the alliance launched DCI, which was intended not only to improve the ability to Article 5 commitments, but also to meet new emerging security challenges. To accomplish these tasks, the alliance had to ensure that its troops had the appropriate equipment, supplies, transport, communications, and training. DCI consisted of 59 operational “action items that NATO seemingly needed to improve. These action items were related to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear attacks; ensuring command, communication and information superiority; improving interoperability of deployed forces and key aspects of combat effectiveness; and ensuring rapid deployment and sustainment of forces” (Buckley 2002, Lindley-French 2007, Berdal and Ucko 2010), and

categorized under deployability and mobility, sustainability and logistics, survivability, consultation, command and control, and effective engagement¹⁶.

Many experts claim that DCI was to a large degree articulated and determined by the US (Heier 2006, Lindley-French 2007, p. 85, Berdal and Ucko 2010) to prepare the European allies for the challenges ahead, and as an American test of European seriousness involving the five areas that DCI addressed. The dilemma European allies were facing, was whether it wanted to continue the development of military capabilities in another direction than US capabilities, which supposedly would result in a dual-track NATO transformation, one going in the war-fighting direction whilst the other towards peace and stability operations. Although DCI benefitted the US due to influence on Europe's evolution (Binnendijk and Kugler 2003), the effect of this divergent development could also be that European forces would only function in degraded mode outside US/NATO operations. The latter effect would thus ensure or maintain a firm US grip on Europe – or as William Pfaff (2002) stated it; making Europe Pentagon's Foreign Legion.

European compliance to DCI however, later on turned out to be harder than expected due to political reluctance and that the action items and DCI as a whole demanded an increase in European defense budgets – an increase that never came. The US mistrust in European capabilities proved evident in the wake of 9/11 (Ek 2007), when US forces initiated a US-initiated and led operation invading Afghanistan because of the experiences of poor decision-making in Kosovo that was coined “war by committees”¹⁷ –again stressing the needs to adapt the Alliance.

4.1.2 Prague Summit 2002: Prague Capabilities Commitments

9/11 accentuated NATO's political differences plaguing the Alliance (Berdal and Ucko 2010), and the failures to address the DCI further widened the political gaps across the Atlantic. It can also be argued that DCI's vagueness and lack of ability to commit NATO member countries, combined with the difficulties in measuring actual effect, led to a second significant effort of transforming NATO, namely PCC. At the Prague Summit, NATO Heads of State

¹⁶ See http://www.nato.int/docu/briefing/capabilities/html_en/capabilities04.html

¹⁷ Targets in Kosovo were not chosen, but voted on by NATO diplomats. NATO's first war in its 50 years existence was implemented through a democratic process.

and Government took another round of crucial decisions affecting the Alliance's role in Euro-Atlantic security and its ability to adjust to new priorities and to adapt its capabilities in order to meet new challenges after the Cold War.

One of the decisions the summit in 2002 reached was the PCC, which is also coined "the godson" of DCI. DCI and PCC are similar in the sense that they have the same ultimate objective: to deliver the urgently needed capability improvements that the Alliance needs to carry out its missions. However, as former assistant Secretary General for NATO Defense planning and Operations division Edgar Buckley points out¹⁸, there are three main, significant differences between DCI and PCC. Firstly, the focus is a lot sharper than its predecessor DCI since the goals are more operationalized and articulated and hence easier to follow up and measure. Secondly, it is based on a different and much tougher form of state commitment. Finally, PCC includes a much greater emphasis on multinational cooperation, including role specialization, and mutual reinforcement with EU's drive to develop military capabilities (Buckley 2002).

These three main differences constitutes the prerequisites that the Prague Summit believed were critical factors needed for a transformation going the right way. The sharper focus and the detailed list of specific shortfalls in PCC committed allied states more than earlier. Although the PCC is classified, Buckley informs that its action items are quite specific and even has fixed time frames to each of the items. In addition, the Prague Summit acknowledged that the members could not acquire several of the improved capabilities required by NATO separately. The need for multinational solutions and "pooling and sharing" of capabilities was therefore emphasized and encouraged, reflected in PCC and the overall outcomes of the summit in 2002 (Buckley 2002).

At the same summit and in addition to the PCC, another major decision was made in order to promote transformation. In order to efficiently adapt and prepare the military organization to new challenges, NATO needed a command structure reform. This led to the establishment of ACT in Norfolk, VA, which was given the ambitious mission to create a strategic combined and joint capability that had global reach through network-enabled forces operating at high levels of technical and doctrinal interoperability. ACT's priority was to be NATO's engine and coordinating actor for change, and include transforming NATO's military capabilities;

¹⁸ Edgar Buckley's article was written before the Prague Summit.

preparing, supporting and sustaining Alliance operations; implementing the NRF and other deployable capabilities; achieving full operational capability; and, of equal importance, assisting the transformation of partner capabilities (Lindley-French 2007).

ACT was intended to be NATO's leading agent for change, driving, facilitating, and advocating continuous improvement of Alliance capabilities to maintain and enhance the military relevance and effectiveness of the Alliance. The command directs ACT's various subordinate commands including the Joint Warfare Centre (ACT JWC), The Joint Forces Training Centre (ACT JFTC), the NATO Undersea Research Centre (ACT NURC), various NATO Schools, the Joint Analysis and Lessons Learned Centre (ACT JALLC). It also has a Transformation Network (TRANSNET) support element consisting of 14 officers and civilians meant to support and accredit the network of COEs.

Whether ACT has succeeded or not, transformation is still a hot topic in the Alliance. Notably after the financial turmoil from 2007 and onwards, NATO has had a stronger need for transformation, with an extra emphasis on cost-effective solutions as NATO entered 2012.

4.1.3 Chicago 2012: Making Defense Smart

Many argue that DCI and PCC's ambitions are still not achieved, but the Alliance has nevertheless reached for new strategic and capability ambitions through the latest strategic concept from the Lisbon Summit in 2010, thus making the need for transformation more pressing. Transformation has become a buzzword and still an important element in today's security policy agenda, and the next NATO Summit that takes place in Chicago May 2012 is a clear indicator of this. This is a summit where "Smart Defense" is one of the most important topics on the agenda, a term that was coined by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen at the Munich Security conference in 2011. The Secretary General has argued that it was "time to make better use of NATO as an adviser and an honest broker - to ensure a degree of coherence in any cuts which states may consider, and to minimize their impact on the overall effectiveness of the Alliance"¹⁹. Coined in a different way, Smart Defense is about "doing more with less" with an emphasis on multilateral solutions in order to achieve coherency within the Alliance – and to achieve NATO's ambitions despite times of austerity and tight economic times. This political rhetoric tells us that transformation is indeed essential

¹⁹ See http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_70327.htm

in order for the Alliance to handle the financial challenges its states faces, and arguably also a sign that the Secretary General is struggling to revitalize the transformational agenda that stems back to DCI and PCC by politically rebranding and renaming transformation.

4.2 NATO Centers of Excellence

The concept COE was created to offer recognized expertise and experience to the benefit of the Alliance, above all in support of the Alliance, and although a specific COE is not part of the NCS, it forms part of the wider framework supporting NATO command arrangements. In this respect, the COE as a concept is delimited to the wider framework of the 16 COEs (+ four in the process of being accredited), including ACT's role in accrediting, assessing and developing the concept. According to ACT, COEs are supposed to focus on four types of value creation:

- Enhancing education and training (including training support)
- Improving interoperability and capabilities
- Assist in doctrine development and/or test and validate concepts through experimentation
- Offer analysis and *Lessons Learned*

The concept has five central principles that relate to participation, added value, resources, NATO standards and clear relationships, and these principles apply for the wider framework of COE:

Participation denotes that involvement in COE activities is open to primarily all allies. Access by other partners, other states and international organizations to COE products however, is the responsibility of sponsoring states, taking into account security requirements. This means that practically any actor can formally (or informally) cooperate with a specific COE. Also in regard to participation, a governing principle is that the manning of a COE is national and/or decided by its sponsoring states.

Added value stresses that there should be added value only and no duplication, a principle stressing that a mandatory purpose for COE is to provide improvement to NATO capabilities rather than competition.

Resources regulate amongst whom and how COE infrastructure, operating and maintenance costs are to be funded. Under this principle lies also the expectation that COEs are not at the expense of NCS and personnel warrants.

Furthermore, *NATO standards* imply that a COE is to conform to appropriate NATO procedures, doctrines and standards. Nevertheless, a COE is encouraged to suggest and propose amendments to doctrines, procedures and standards as and when appropriate, for subsequent endorsement and/or ACT/NATO.

Finally, *a clear relationship is* states that the sponsoring states and the appropriate steering committees are to define clear relationships and guidelines through Memorandums of Understandings (MOUs) and technical arrangements. These documents cover administrative and practical agreements and governing principles that apply specifically for the respective COEs.

Concerning clear relationships and further developing COE as a concept, ACT also plays a role in three ways regarding COEs. Firstly, ACT is responsible for accrediting COEs that are offered by a sponsoring state. SACT here develops the criteria for this process, based on the five principles mentioned above. Secondly, to ensure it still meets these principles, ACT periodically screens a COE. If the COE fails to meet ACT's criteria, ACT will then recommend the necessary steps to be taken in order to regain accreditation. There is yet to be a center that has lost its ACT accreditation, but it is hypothetically possible. Thirdly, it is ACT's responsibility to identify areas of military activity where there are gaps in expertise that an existing COE should target, or where a new COE might be appropriate.

4.2.1 The Population of Different Centers of Excellence

There are 16 accredited centers and 4 COEs in development, and they are all unique in their own manner. The centers range from newer and transnational subjects matters as energy security (COE-ENSEC), defense against terrorism (COE-DAT), and cooperative cyber defense (COE-CCD), to more traditional defense subject matters as command and control (COE-C2), human intelligence (COE-HUMINT), and military medicine (COE-MILMED). Each COE is different from the others in a number of ways, where one of the most important differences is the number of supporting states to each center; none at the lowest (only one framework state, no supporting states) to 17 (framework state + 16 supporting). The degree of

multilateralism and actual size in terms of personnel is therefore different from each center. The following table (table 2) shows the whole population of accredited and non-accredited COEs according to ACT.

Table 2 over COEs in NATO. Center in italic are in the process of being accredited. Source: ACT Transformation Network (<https://transnet.act.nato.int/WISE>)

Subject matter	Framework state	No of supporting states *	Personnel warrants (PE)**
Command and control (C2)	Netherlands	7	22/21
Analysis and Simulation for Air Operations (CASPOA)	France	1	30/42
Cooperative Cyber Defense (CCD)	Estonia	9	19/24
Counter-Improvised Explosive Devices (CIED)	Spain	7	23/59
Civil Military Cooperation (CIMIC)	Germany and the Netherlands	6	51/56
Combined Joint Operations from the Sea (CJOS)	United States	12	27/32
Operations for Confined and Shallow Waters (CSW)	Germany	6	33/41
Cold Weather Operations (CWO)	Norway	0	4/4
Defense Against Terrorism (DAT)	Turkey	7	75/93
Human Intelligence (HUMINT)	Romania	7	50/64
Joint Air Power Competence Centre (JAPCC)	Germany	17	85/97
Joint Chemical, Biological, Radiation and Nuclear Defense (JCBRN)	Czech Republic	10	58/64
Military Engineering (MILENG)	Germany + Hungary	14	30/38
Military Medicine (MILMED)	Hungary	6	31/43
Naval Mine Warfare (NMW)	Belgium and the Netherlands	3	-
Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD)	Slovakia	5	14/24
<i>Modeling and simulation (M&S)***</i>	<i>Italy</i>	-	-
<i>Mountain Warfare (MW)***</i>	<i>Slovenia</i>	-	-
<i>Military Police (MP)***</i>	<i>Poland</i>	-	-
<i>Energy security (ENSEC)***</i>	<i>Lithuania</i>	-	-

* Information collected from the respective COE's official webpages March 2012

** PE stands for peacetime establishment, a term that means authorized peacetime manpower requirement for a unit, formation or headquarters. Also called peacetime complement or personnel warrants. The numbers are collected from ACT's COE Catalogue published in February 2011. The numbers are positions occupied compared to the total number of warrants

*** COE in development, not yet NATO accredited (March 27th 2012)

Ever since the first COE was established, the network has developed rapidly. The number of supporting states for the respective centers is increasing every year, so are the numbers of accredited centers. The most recent news of a state that is in the process of accreditation is

Lithuania and a center on energy security (COE-ENSEC). Lithuania just hosted a 1st MOU-conference, in which ACT by TNB and 16 states participated (amongst others Norway). Similar processes are also in the making for three other centers seeking accreditation (COE for Model and Simulation (MS), Mountain Warfare (MW), and Military Police (MP)).

5 Analysis

This chapter will present the empirical evidence collected and organized on the theoretical basis described in chapter two on theoretical framework, and as described in chapter three on methodology. The chapter is structured in such a way that it reflects the two research questions.

The first part will systematically present some of the telling quotes from the empirical evidence to illustrate the matches with the institutional logics analytical framework. This will be done by first assessing the logics two by two (four in total), and then discuss which logics that seem more prevailing or obvious than others. The second part will first assess the role(s) that the COE concept plays in the field of defense transformation in NATO. It will then use the findings from the first part that constitute the concept's rationale, and respectively analyze the concept's strategic intention, relevance and importance.

5.1 Identifying Institutional Logics

The first research question is analyzed by matching the empirical evidence to the theoretical expectations, and is presented in pairs of institutional logics. This section will first analyze the four institutional logics before it summarizes the matches of the logics with the empirical evidence.

5.1.1 Defense Sovereignty vs. Defense Solidarity

Indicators of Defense Sovereignty

The following empirical assumptions would support a logic of defense sovereignty: 1.1) a primacy of state interests in governing COE, 1.2) a governing body and principles played out by officers/eq. that act on behalf of their state interests, and 1.3) requests for support (RFS) are given less priority. The empirical data prove a limited presence of a logic of defense sovereignty, but nevertheless support the logic in terms of how centers organize themselves. When it comes to what the appropriate sources of influence on the COE's scope and mission, the evidence proves inadequate to support the institutional logic of defense sovereignty. The arguments are systematically presented supported in the following sections.

In regard to the state interests in governing COEs (1.1), the findings show that the concept is based on a “bottom-up” approach, which seems to be an important principle that centers are operated and governed by the involved states (framework state(s) + supporting states). Admiral Jo Gade, one of my informants with solid experience from NATO’s International Military Staff (IMS), points this out particularly clearly:

*“The fact that the nations are free to organize themselves is natural in many ways, it is after all the framework and supporting nations that are paying all the basic costs [...] this is cost-free for NATO, so if NATO starts interfering, I think the nations would react”.*²⁰

Gade’s point is that those who pay for a center are those who are the rightful decision-makers. This is also regulated through the five governing principles for COEs, mainly *participation* and *clear relationships*, in which both emphasize autonomy in terms of governing themselves. Lt. Col. Terje Roa is currently stationed at the COE-JAPCC, and further elaborates by pointing out what the practical consequences of this is:

*“Since COEs are outside NATO command structure and only has status as a NATO body, NATO has no authority or responsibility. This implies that all products that run out of COEs are only of an advisory character”.*²¹

This means that the respective centers are autonomous, as agreed on in the governing MC-document, MOUs and technical agreements amongst involved states. This formal autonomy, as stressed by my informants, is nevertheless restricted to governing the respective centers in terms of resources and personnel. When it comes to requests for support however, Lt. col. Roa is concerned that this independence from NATO structures must be limited to *how* the centers solve their missions within a given scope, and he signals an inconvenience on the notion that centers are independent in the sense that they decide fully on *what* mission they should solve, and *within what scope*. Roa writes that

*“Certain elements are concerned that COEs should not pay attention to requests for support from anyone since they are independent, but that they should only comply to others when suitable to the involved nations”.*²²

Other informants also support this notion, and emphasize that the COE concept will lose its relevance if it is to tear loose entirely from NATO’s transformational agenda, and instead go

²⁰ Interview with Jo Gade

²¹ E-mail interview with Terje Roa

²² E-mail interview with Terje Roa

independent. The quote also depicts the clear limitation on a potential logic of defense sovereignty; It is only perceived as appropriate that COEs are sovereign in terms of governing COEs, but that this perception of appropriateness does not apply in terms of the principles that govern a COE's scope, missions and concrete projects.

Nevertheless, Lt. Col. Geir Furø, an officer with four years of experience as a staff officer at the C2COE in the Netherlands, stressed state interests when governing the program of work within his COE. He states that

*"[...] we were very clear that we were most the offensive ones within the COE to get something out of the cooperation and that had to be in Norway's interest."*²³

Despite this point, another informant who wished to stay anonymous on that specific quote, implied that state interest could only be achieved *if* it harmonizes with ACTs and NATOs needs. He supports this by an incident at one COE, where one state tried to outmaneuver other states in order to gain their own state interests. Nonetheless, it seemed that this was a result of weak leadership during that period of time, and that this state was dealt with later on. As the officer emphasized, the state's officers in that specific COE "kept in their place", by clearly sanctioning the behavior because its interests did not correspond with common interests. Again, the empirical evidence supports the notion that achieving state interest is appropriate, but only if it corresponds with common interests.

Although state interest did not seem to dominate the COEs program of work, the participation in a COE itself seemed to be highly esteemed and in the state interest. Participation in a NATO project to achieve status and recognition is called flag waving, and illustrates the aspect that contributions are mere politics, making the signal effect of contributing to NATO a state interest. Since the command structure reforms since the Prague Summit 2002, admiral Gade argues that

"Even though we saw a tug of war to keep central commands and headquarters on the different territories, most countries have understood that they could never achieve a new NATO headquarter on their soil [...]. With today's resources it is clear it will never even happen. In that respect, COE has a good NATO flag effect. [...] It is obvious that having NATOs flag on their territory has a certain prestige, especially for newer members that are

²³ Interview with Geir Furø

*stressing for their own population but also for others that NATO cares about them. I believe that COEs play an important role in emphasizing that “NATO is here too”.*²⁴

Several others also emphasize the important effect of flag waiving for framework states, an effect for contributing countries in NATO that must not be underestimated, regardless of what they contribute. Nonetheless, is freedom to organize a center and the effect of flag waving the only elements where a logic of defense sovereignty seems to be dominant? It seems so, according to Lt. Col. Roa, as he states that

*“[...] the respective sponsoring nation shows too little interest in identifying and using COE outcomes compared to the resources they put in in the center. They’re are in many ways content that they have given their resources, and leave the responsibility for others to govern the resources in a best possible way. The responsibility for maximizing the outcome with the given resources is mostly left for the COEs themselves.”*²⁵

Lt. Col. Roa also claims that at his center, “the respective sponsoring states (all of them) have had more focus on flag waiving and a show-off that they’re contributing to NATO rather than seeing what results they can get out of their states’ contributions”. Although only one senior staff officer affiliated with a ministry of defense (MOD, the Norwegian more specifically) was interviewed, also he signaled that the Norwegian MOD has very little to do at all with COEs other than assessing whether Norway should formally support other foreign COEs. The fact that the Norwegian MOD has nothing/little to do with the COE concept could indicate that state interests do not play a very strong role in the COE concept. Nonetheless, just using one example on on the relationship between MOD-COE could prove inconclusive, but the finding is interesting and weakens the assumption of a strong logic of defense sovereignty within the COE concept, and is therefore taken into account when considering the logic as whole.

The last indicator expected that RFS are given less priority (1.3), but the empirical evidence supporting this indicator was not mentioned at all. On the contrary, my evidence supports the opposite, namely that RFS are of high priority for the COE concept. These findings will be properly elaborated under the logic of defense solidarity.

²⁴ Interview with Gade

²⁵ E-mail interview with Roa

Indicators of Defense Solidarity

The logic of defense solidarity (logic 2) would mean that the empirical evidence would support 2.1) a primacy of NATO needs and interests in administering a COE, 2.2) subject matter experts that constitute governing bodies and principles in which military professional needs is the top priority, and 2.3) that requests for support (RFS) are given high priorities. In contrast to the former logic, it seems that a logic of defense solidarity matches the empirical evidence a lot better. There is one difference however, namely that the logic of sovereignty is evident in regard to *organizing* the centers (e.g. formal agreements), whereas the logic of defense solidarity is appropriate in terms of *what* the centers work on or get its directions from. This difference is supported more or less by all informants, and will be presented in the following section.

When asked whether COE's configuration strikes the right balance between solidarity and sovereignty in transforming NATO, it might be natural to start with the one of the statements given by the commander of ACT:

*"COE's configuration enables them to respond to relevant and time-critical problems, as well as work on projects for future needs. Requests for support (RFS) are collected through the annual COE Program of Work development process, which is the primary tool for coordination of NATO input to each COE."*²⁶

These requests, responses and tools for coordination seem to be heavily regulated by the ACT TNB. Every year there is a COE Director's Conference that all centers chiefs participate in, and where ACT's coordinating role is more evident. The event's aim is to discuss NATO-COE cooperation, to determine a way ahead and broaden COE director's networking in order to increase individual and collective effectiveness of the centers²⁷. The previous COE Director's conference was at COE-CASPOA in October 2011, and prior to that ACT TNB organized a COE workshop in March 2011 in Norfolk (VA) United States, in which they develop the drafts to the respective COEs program of work that were subject to formal approbation at the Director's Conference. From this, ACT arguably gains a strong position to regulate the COE network. As one of the senior staff officers actually (in confidence) states that it is

²⁶ From an online Q&A session with gen. Abrial hosted by Atlantic Community (see appendix A)

²⁷ From ACT's transformation network intranet <https://transnet.act.nato.int/>

“ACT that coordinate and send COEs drafts for their programs of work, before the COEs send to sponsoring nations for their feedback, before the programs go back to ACT for further processing and coordination.”²⁸

The quote states that ACT is both the first and final point of every draft for the respective COE’s program of work, something that seems to be a natural part of the COE concept in the sense that the senior staff officers that were interviewed did not perceive these coordination mechanisms conflicting national interest, but rather an advantage. In this respect, ACT arguably has a lot of de facto agenda-setting power when it comes to what projects that COEs work with. Chief of the Transformation Network Branch ACT col. Storm explains that

“RFS are submitted by ACT to COEs once a year, in July-August time frame. They are taken very “seriously” by COEs and practically all are included in COE programs of works (POW). This is ensured by the staff level coordination during the whole process of COE Program of Work (POW) development process.”²⁹

These processes and the notion that COEs takes these very “seriously”, support the indicator that RFS are of high priority. It seems that RFS are so important to the COE concept, that there is also a mechanism to process urgent (out of cycle – OOC) RFS, as col. Storm elaborates:

“OOC RFS are submitted on ad hoc bases, out of the regular process. They are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. ACT will provide support to the center, for example, ACT may provide support when the prioritization of the new OOC RFS would affect COE resources already utilized in support for existing RFS.”³⁰

This means that RFS can be sent to COEs continuously, seemingly based on what the Alliance needs. Lt Col Roa underlines the importance of taking these RFS seriously, because

“[i]f COEs want to maintain their relevance in the future, their Program of Work (POW) must be linked to those priorities and demands that come from NATO and sponsoring nations.”³¹

One informant suggested making the COE concept more responsive and agile to pressing needs directed from ACT, supplementing the evidence for a logic of defense solidarity:

²⁸ The informant did not wish to be quoted on this particular section

²⁹ E-mail interview with Helmar Storm

³⁰ E-mail interview with Helmar Storm

³¹ E-mail interview with Terje Roa

“[i]t would be better to do POW every six months so you can eliminate the projects that were never realized, and so that we can update more relevant projects – this would highly improve the percentage of projects that would actually be executed and finished.”

Still, Lt. col. Roa went even further and stated that despite the role ACT has in regulating COEs as described in the former quote, there is need for even supranational regulation, as he has experienced

“a lack of guidelines and enthusiasm from NATO and supporting nations to really exploit the capacity that JAPCC and other COEs represent.”³²

Roa is perhaps the clearest voice for a stronger ACT regulation of COEs, with the point that alternative solutions have been created to fill in the gaps after NATO command structure reforms, but without the necessary governing, steering, and coordinating mechanisms to compensate for independent multilateral solutions. In other words, COEs are thought to balance a leaner NCS, but is a counterweight that risks its relevance and relation to NATO if there are not formalized (if not rigid) connections between the two. Several others informants implicitly or explicitly support this notion, but in different degrees. Nevertheless, the perception that it is appropriate that COEs support ACT through requests for support is very strong among the informants (indicator 2.3), and thus supports a logic of defense solidarity.

The empirical evidence also suggests that the COE concept is “subject matter expertise first, state interests later”. As described under the sections assessing the logic of defense sovereignty, it seemed that the Norwegian MOD was minimally involved in the COE concept. With the notable exceptions of flag waiving and *how* to organize the centers, the COE concept seems to be driven by military professional needs and principles, supporting the first and second empirical indicator for this logic (indicator 2.2).

5.1.2 Defense Exclusiveness vs. Defense Pluralism

Defense Exclusiveness

The institutional logic that matches the empirical evidence the least is the logic of defense exclusiveness. The empirical expectations for this particular logic were three-fold, one could expect 3.1) no room for partnerships with states or international organizations 3.2) little to no civil-military cooperation with other external entities (industry, private companies, schools,

³² E-mail interview with Roa

universities, research institutes, etc.), and 3.3) restrictive information sharing. Even though ACT strongly encourages the two types of relationships described in the two first indicators, it is not obvious that a given COE is willing to follow this. Nevertheless, this does not seem to be the case at all concerning COEs, where evidence that would support a logic of defense exclusiveness was non-sufficient. In terms of indicator three on the other hand, there seemed to be some evidence that there were some exclusive routines for information sharing. However, as the evidence will show, this was just *one* situation that was discussed, and that later turned out to be sanctioned because it was considered inappropriate.

Having empirical evidence that is limited to the last indicator of this logic (indicator 3.3), the evidence revealed a challenge that was related to information sharing between NATO member countries and non-NATO countries. As part of his position at a specific COE, one staff officer had conducted several assessments for national and multilateral capabilities in his position in a COE. This Norwegian officer specifically mentioned that he had done an assessment for a EU Battle Group (EUBG), which he stated was

“[...] carried through as a EU confidential or EU restricted assessment, so we, as a Norwegians, could not take part in the report, even though we showed the Norwegian flag and said come on, we’re a sponsoring nation.”³³

This statement shows that diversity in standards and information sharing procedures was an initial problem that led to one of the sponsoring state not getting access to a product of the center it was part of. Nonetheless, using this incident to support a logic of defense exclusiveness would be insufficient, as the same staff officer later said that

“[...] it was later on decided that all information that was retrieved by the COE was to be shared with everyone, it then had to be published in an individual publication classified as a NATO classified releasable to all, [...] to avoid getting into the same situation, the principle is that all information must be shared with all participating nations.”

These two quotes exemplifies that a regime for classifying sensitive information can (and has in this case) hindered information sharing within a COE project, and supports that these regulations per se impede effective information sharing. However, and as the second quote shows, the principle that all information must be shared with all participating states in a project regardless of institutional affiliation, trumps the significance of classifying standards for information sharing. Indeed, another officer stressed that these principles concerning

³³ The informant did not wish to be quoted on this particular section

information sharing seemed to be systematically ignored because it conflicted with the mission of the COE concept – information was shared *under-the-table*.

From the arguments presented in the former sections, it is reasonable to conclude that a logic of defense exclusiveness is non-sufficient to non-existent. The participants do express that it is not appropriate that the COE concept is exclusive in terms of the three indicators, most vocally concerning information sharing (indicator 3.3). The example of EUBG assessment admittedly revealed a hinder for effective information sharing with non-EU entities, but the perception that “all information must be shared with all participating states” easily trumps this formality both in regard to an institutional logic and practical solutions to reach a solution.

Taking all the evidence into account, there is nothing that seem to indicate that a logic of defense exclusiveness dominates within the concept of COE. It is clear the MC document’s (NATO 2003) strong encouragements to establish and maintain strong relationships as described in the two first indicators of the logic presented in the theoretical framework are in sync with the personnel interviewed. In other words, the indicators were not present, and cannot support a logic of defense exclusiveness. In terms of information sharing however, there was one example that proved restrictive information sharing. When elaborated though, the experience gained by that specific center made changes that were not consistent with the third empirical indicator of the logic. Assessing the evidence of the logic of defense pluralism on the other hand, will conversely show why and how pluralism matches the empirical evidence must stronger, and consequently weakening the logic of defense exclusiveness furthermore.

Logic of Defense Pluralism

Together with the logic of solidarity, the logic of defense pluralism matches the empirical evidence the best out of the four institutional logics. According to the theoretical framework, the logic of defense solidarity implies 1) that partnerships with states or international organizations are highly esteemed, 2) a high degree of civil-military cooperation with other external entities (industry, private companies, schools, universities, etc.), and 3) effective information sharing. These three indicators were clearly evident throughout the empirical material collected for this thesis, and will be systematically presented in the following sections.

The first indicator was first of all clearly stated in terms of partnerships with other states outside NATO (indicator 4.1). The clearest example is Finland, which is formally a supporting state to COE for Operations for Confined and Shallow Waters (CSW) in Germany, although the state is not part of NATO. Furthermore, the Norwegian COE-CWO also informally involves Sweden and Finland in their winter training, seminars and courses, although they are not part of NATO. Who the respective COEs collaborate with can therefore seem to be more partner-driven beyond its alliance-orientation, and COE-JAPCC's policy on partnerships also seems to apply for the concept as such:

“COE-JAPCC is open for, and working actively to establish contact with actors outside the traditional chains of command, hereby EU, industry, Pfp, etc. The contact varies depending on how deep it goes. It can happen through participation in meetings, give briefs, and directly cooperate in solving specific projects.”³⁴

This openness for partnerships is also evident for international organizations, where the EU seems to be a natural partner for the COE concept and its respective centers. The officers interviewed seemed to be eager to collaborate beyond the NATO framework, thus indicating a fatigue after political conflicts that have formerly hindered military cooperation. When asked whether EU, Pfp and other non-NATO countries had the possibility to participate in any form of COE cooperation, admiral Gade stated that:

“You do have this NATO-EU challenge [...] I think it is sad that we haven't come longer than we have today, because the intentions are so good. Sec. Gen. in NATO and baroness Ashton continuously state that we have to improve processes. That won't be possible without a political solution to the Cyprus-conflict.”³⁵

This political obstacle was despite this NATO-EU challenge overcome whenever possible. In particular in regard to developing capabilities, the admiral emphasizes that within the 21 common members of EU and NATO, there are common interests and democratic values, it is “a disaster that we waste so much time and energy doing thing in our own respective ways”. Gade elaborates that:

“As long as you don't involve all nations on political level, we see that there is excellent cooperation on ground between NATO and EU, also within the COE concept. At staff level, in IMS and EU's military staff: incredibly good cooperation, we exchanged information on every area. We had no limits, documents or anything, and kept each other

³⁴ E-mail interview with Roa

³⁵ Interview with Gade

posted on everything. But the minute you want something approved on institutional level, then the Greeks, Cypriots and Turks blocks everything."³⁶

Because the COE concept is not constantly dependent on approvals, agreements and consensus from these institutional levels, but rather only the states that are formally represented in a respective COE's steering group, the concept and principles thereby serve as a backdoor to a stronger partnership between NATO (through specific COEs) and EU members (and institution as whole). Encouragements to engage non-NATO countries as contributing partners seemed to be followed, and could be an possible starting point for expanding the NATO-EU partnership, without going through the institutional level. The personnel interviewed seemed to have no problem at all to use this backdoor to cement EU-NATO cooperation, on the contrary they followed ACT's encouragements to establish and maintain these kinds of relationships, and seemed eager to cooperate beyond the NATO framework.

The second indicator (4.2) implies a high degree of civil-military cooperation with other external entities (industry, private companies, schools, universities, etc.). This indicator seems to be strongly supported throughout the empirical evidence. Naval officer Ove Nyaas states this quite simply by saying

*"[o]ur threshold is low, we use external non-military actors in a lot of our ongoing work. Especially during our annual Maritime Security Conference, where it is exactly these actors that are central for the conference."*³⁷

This low threshold seems to be found in regard to the specific centers and also as a concept as whole, and is perceived as a strength for the concept. The informants acknowledge that COEs does not only serve as hubs for information and best practices, but may also serve as a matchmaker between private institutions with expertise on one subject matter area and state militaries (and NATO as alliance). One magnificent example of this matchmaking is between the COE for civil-military cooperation (COE-CIMIC) and NGOs that work on the same issues as the COE. Chief for ACT TNB explains:

"A COE, such as CIMIC COE, has a vital interest in building and maintaining relationships with non-military actors. [...] COEs have the unique capability to build relationships with non-military actors, particularly international organizations and NGOs,

³⁶ Interview with Gade

³⁷ E-mail interview with Nyaas

without the constraint of NATO or military setting. The reason for this was explained by the COE-CIMIC– sometimes the large NGOs are reluctant to cooperate with NATO as they see it as a pure military organization. Yet, these same organizations see the COEs as somewhat less than a pure military organization simply because the COE is independent and not part of the NATO command structure.”³⁸

Col. Storm perceived this configuration and potential for cooperation as a “huge advantage to NATO as we can effectively leverage this relationship”. Although advantageous, leveraging this potential advantage was not perceived stress-free by all informants. Lt. col. Furø voiced his concerns, mainly in regard to private companies and industry, as he stated that

*“It takes a lot of effort to monitor and supervise contacts in individual private companies. In this case it’s better to follow up a whole organization that again follows up their private companies. [...] it is important to be careful, especially in regard to the industry, to be honest and transparent. [...] There were several advocates for more contact with the industry that could have given NATO a lot in return, but it just took too much of resources that we already had little of.”*³⁹

Although this quote supports the second indicator (4.2), it clearly states that even though it is perceived appropriate to maintain a high degree of civil-military cooperation (with industry in this case), it is demanding since it is constraining a COE’s resources.

The very last indicator (4.3) implies that effective information sharing is important within the concept of COE. As discussed in the logic of defense exclusiveness, regimes for information classification seemed to be a hinder for effective information sharing (indicator 4.3). However, the incident was only an initial challenge that was more or less eliminated because the specific COE’s governing body found it more appropriate that all participating states in a project must have the same access to information. This finding does not only dismiss the indicator of restrictive information sharing under the logic of defense exclusiveness (3.3), it also strengthens the indicator that effective information sharing (and thus the logic of defense pluralism) is highly valued within the concept (4.3).

If COEs can be seen as clusters of states working on common endeavors in the framework of NATO, what is perceived as the appropriate level of information sharing beyond the participating states in a specific COE? General Orderud Skare states that all allies must have access to outcomes from COE projects regardless of degree of involvement:

³⁸ E-mail interview with Storm

³⁹ Interview with Furø

“Denmark is not formally supporting any COEs, they don’t host any themselves, and don’t have any officers affiliated within the centers or the concept as whole. They’ve chosen to stay completely outside the COE network, but do they have access to these products? Of course they have access to them if they want.”⁴⁰

The view that it is appropriate that the COE products are open to all allies beyond the framework and supporting states is a common one in the empirical material for this thesis, but this notion does not seem to automatically mean that all allies in fact receive COE products:

“Yes, the whole of NATO has access. Not only sponsoring nations and ACT and ACO, but all the NATO nations. I guess we didn’t send to all allies automatically, only to the NATO bodies and the supporting nations.”⁴¹

If however, some states beyond the constellation of states that run a COE have some kind of interest in a COE product, they need to know that someone is actually producing whatever is in their interest – and that they have access to these products. The empirical evidence show that the COE’s product might not be sufficiently visible and known in the Alliance to realize the full potential of the concept, which can be said to be a hinder to achieve openness that the indicator implies. Lt Col Roa did rightfully state that there is a lack of willingness to exploit the capacity that his COE (COE-JAPCC) represent (see the last quote in the section for defense solidarity), and other informants also imply that there is a lack of knowledge (or visibility) to what the COE concept can actually provide to allied forces. Although making the centers more visible probably would increase the effectiveness of information sharing even more, the indicator that information sharing is nevertheless perceived as quite important, if not one of the success criteria for the concept as whole, according to the empirical material.

Taking the evidence that support the three indicators of a logic of defense pluralism into consideration, there is little doubt that this logic represent a set of features and characteristics of the COE concept that the informants view as appropriate. Despite some hinders to effective partnerships and information sharing, the value of these qualities are admired and seemingly pursued within the COE concept.

⁴⁰ Interview with Kjell-Ove Orderud Skare

⁴¹ Interview with Furø

5.1.3 Matching the Patterns – What Logics Dominate COEs?

Coming back to the first research question on which institutional logics that can be identified in regard to what COE solutions and features that are appropriate, it is clear that the logics of defense solidarity and logic of defense pluralism are the two logics that are most evident and dominating in the empirical material. This does however, not necessarily mean that the two other logics (sovereignty and exclusiveness) can be proven non-existent, as there can be singular elements that prove the opposite. Also worth repeating is one of the weaknesses of the case study, namely the danger of generalizing the conclusions gained by a small N (in this case the number of informants and their perceptions and feedback).

Nevertheless, according to the logic of defense sovereignty the informants found it appropriate (and to a certain degree natural) that state interest will dominate questions concerning how to organize a specific center and flag waving as motivation to establish a center. In the other subordinate logic of exclusiveness however, there seemed to be no significant elements in the empirical evidence where a logic of exclusiveness was found appropriate. All the logics and their most significant findings in the empirical material lay the foundation for the concept’s rationale for further analysis on whether it is coherent with NATO strategic guideline, and the findings from the first research question is summarized in table 3:

Table 3 Summary of the COEs institutional logics

Logic of sovereignty (1)	Logic of solidarity (2)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should govern how COEs organize themselves • Flag waving (participation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NATO should govern or regulate what COEs do (program of work) • Stresses the importance of RFS
Logic of exclusiveness (3)	Logic of pluralism (4)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages partnerships and civil-military cooperation • Encourages information sharing, despite NATO limitations

5.2 COE and its Role in NATO Transformation

The second part of this chapter answers the second research question, namely *what roles the COE concept play in the field of defense transformation in NATO, and what the concept's strategic intention, relevance and importance is.*

The first element in the second research question seeks to answer what roles the concept actually plays. To answer that question, the thesis will first assess three potential roles that the COE concept might play in NATO transformation. Furthermore, a more overall qualitative assessment on whether the concept follows the same strategic logic as NATO transformation will be presented, by looking at the concept's strategic intention, relevance and importance. The findings from the institutional logics analyzed in research question one are used as a foundation for what is understood as the concept's rationale, understood as the set of reasons or a logical basis for the COE concept. This rationale will in the final part of the research question be analyzed to assess a potential match with NATO transformation strategic guidelines 1) national commitments, 2) role specialization, 3) pooling military capabilities, 4) interoperability, and 5) cost-effectiveness, and thus discussing the concept's strategic intention, relevance and importance in regard to NATO transformation.

5.2.1 COE's Role in NATO Transformation

The answer to what role COE might play in NATO transformation seems to be that the concept's most important role (and potential) is primarily to identify transformational gaps in NATO, and to support specific capabilities and NATO as such in filling in these gaps. In terms of executing transformational needs, the concept does seem to have neither the authority nor the wish to have an operative role in NATO transformation. The following sections will elaborate findings regarding these three role perceptions within the COE concept.

In regard to the role of *identifying* transformational needs, rear admiral Jo Gade was clear that COE has had an important role before all else when it comes to identifying specific Smart Defense projects. He states that

*“It was ACT that had a lead role in regard to Smart Defense; they actually came with 200 specific projects for Smart Defense initiatives to address transformational gaps, and COEs played a significant role in this”.*⁴²

Identifying specific projects that can be categorized under Smart Defense is one thing; another thing is whether COEs actually identify operational gaps and potential through operational assessments. The officer that was quoted anonymously under section 5.1.1 (Logic of defense sovereignty) had conducted several assessments for state and multilateral capabilities in his position in a COE. The COE had developed a methodology for assessing different capabilities (from singular companies to multinational brigades/eq.). The sole purpose of these assessments was to identify gaps in capabilities and offer advice to the leadership of these capabilities on how to fill in these gaps. The emphasis that this specific center had on assessments and “mentoring” to reach overall transformational needs is something that was a recurring theme for all COEs or areas of expertise, making the COE concept’s role and potential for identifying transformational gaps and measures very apparent. Using the clusters of subject matter experts organized in COEs as inspectors for exercises and experiments to identify shortfalls is something that is an important role for COEs. Concerning the link between the COEs and NATO (mainly ACT), it is reasonable to expect that the standards and criteria for assessing capabilities are identical to NATO’s transformational needs, in coherence with the logic of defense solidarity.

In addition to its role in identifying specific Smart Defense projects and pinpointing gaps and shortfalls in capabilities, the concept play an important role in actually *supporting* NATO transformational processes – although the respective centers are outside NCS. The logic of defense solidarity encourages the centers to support NATO transformational needs, and as one informant stated: “COEs agree to accept NATO as the “primary customer”⁴³, a role that is further elaborated by SACT:

“NATO COEs play a valuable role in Alliance transformation. They are a good example of cost-efficient cooperation amongst nations coordinated by NATO, as promoted by Smart Defense. Further development of COEs as education and trainings hubs is of the projects within the Smart Defense initiative. COEs offer much needed multinational solutions

⁴² Interview with Gade

⁴³ E-mail interview with Storm

for transformation-related issues, as well as support to ongoing operations. They are an additional resource in terms of personnel and, in particular, subject matter experts.”⁴⁴

The role of supporting ongoing operations is also emphasized by rear admiral Jo Gade, and can prove to be very valuable combat service support elements in an operation. The clearest element of this “reach-back” aspect is from the Czech COE for Joint Chemical, Biological, Radioactive and Nuclear COE (COE-JCBRN), where

“it has become a power asset, because you have this reach-back system. In an operation you suddenly stumble over something chemical, biological or radioactive, and instead of having expertise on all areas in every operation, you can have an expert system where you report back to a COE where experts eventually send staff to the operation theatre.”⁴⁵

Using COEs as ad hoc supporting “consultants” instead of embedding the experts into every single operation seems to be a cost-effective and multilateral solution that is in the very spirit of NATO transformation, and that according to the informants has the potential of becoming a valuable asset not only for operations, but also for the ongoing NATO transformation as a whole.

The last role in *executing* transformation in NATO was the role in regard to NATO transformation that there was no empirical evidence to back up. The reason is apparent; COEs have no power or command authority in NATO since it is not part of NCS, which means that a center cannot pass binding decisions on the Alliance. It can still suggest doctrines, specific changes, and act as a consultant to the Alliance, but the way it is configured now it has no formal authority. As several of the informants state, the concept has an advisory role to ACT at the end of the day, meaning that it is up to NATO decision-making bodies to execute and make binding decisions – not COEs as such.

5.2.2 Strategic Analysis of the COE Concept

Having assessed the four institutional logics and what roles the concept play in NATO transformation, the last part of this chapter will present a strategic analysis of the COE concept. This part of the analysis is divided in two parts, the first one will discuss whether the COE concept is driven by NATO transformation strategic intentions (analyzing strategic

⁴⁴ From a question sent to Atlantic Community, answered by Abrial

⁴⁵ Interview with Gade

intention), whereas the second will answer whether COEs plays a strategic role in NATO transformation (analyzing strategic relevance and importance).

Analyzing Strategic Intention

The first part of this strategic analysis is whether the COE concept is a result of NATO transformation's strategic intentions. The immediate answer to this question is that is hard to argue that the concept steered by transformation needs, in which ACT would have a central role. The main arguments for this is 1) the randomness of how the specific centers were established, combined with 2) framework state's arguably strong desire for flag waving, and finally 3) how a framework state's COE tasks itself with an area expertise.

The first argument for why the COE concept was never driven by NATO transformation strategic intentions is apparent by investigating when the respective COEs where established. Whereas the first COE was established in 2004 (COE-JAPCC), the following centers have been accredited later (most of them between 2007 and 2010). Since the Prague summit in 2002 and PCC, the Alliance decided to reform the organization so it had a leaner, more efficient, effective and a deployable command structure, and parallel to this there has been a downsizing of the organization that would have required national and multilateral initiatives to balance this reform. Whether the COE concept can be said to be a strategic element in balancing the organization in this respect, is somewhat implausible, especially given that there does not seem to be a link between the PCC in 2002 (and the subsequent MC-document regulating the COE-concept that came in December 2003) and the establishment of most COEs several years later.

Another aspect of this first argument is that ACT has never instructed any states to establish any COEs (or tasking them a specific subject matter area for that sake). A result of the COE concept's autonomy (and the Alliance's political nature as such) has been that ACT actually cannot instruct any framework states or COEs. It is an importance principle that states offer their expertise to NATO themselves by seeking accreditation by ACT. This means that it is outside NATO's reach to control in what direction the Alliance is to "drive transformation" through the COE concept, it has to come from the states themselves in a bottom-up approach. This lack of steering possibilities consequently leads to a lack of a necessary potential for NATO to take strategic leadership and control of the COE concept, and hence leading to an

unintended and arguably random establishment of what is now 16 COEs (and four in the process of gaining NATO accreditation).

This aspect also needs to be seen in light of the second argument for why the COE concept's evolution cannot be said to evolve according to a logic where NATO transformational needs are in the center, namely framework state's arguably strong desire to flag wave. In this regard, it is naive to believe that framework state strategy and intention for establishing and maintaining a COE is the same as NATO's strategy for transformation, which was also argued under the logic of defense sovereignty. The key question is whether a COE is established as a result of a state interest (flag waving) or as a result of NATO needs (to fill in transformational gaps). These two different strategic motivations for establishing a COE could of course be coherent, but since it is a framework state that seeks accreditation for a specific COE, and not NATO, it is reasonable to believe that the elements in a national strategic motivation to establish a center will outplay the elements in a NATO strategy for transformation – if these elements are not coherent. In other words, state interest, not alliance transformation needs, arguably dominates in terms of strategic intentions for a specific COE.

The last argument for why the COE concept cannot be said to have evolved strategically intended according to NATO transformation from the start, is by investigating what roles and subject matters the specific center specialize in. According to my sources, a COE's subject matter area has never been driven by neither transformational needs nor instructions from NATO. On the contrary, a COE's field of expertise is a result of whatever abilities, capabilities and resources the framework state already has (often for a long time). Norway has always focused on cold weather operations (thus COE for Cold Weather Operations), Turkey has had long experience with ethnic conflicts and terrorism (thus COE for Defense against Terrorism), the French had a center for analysis and simulation for air operations (COE-CASPOA) long before it got accredited by NATO (established formally in 1997 and accredited in 2008), just to name a few examples. Although the COE concept coordinates and collects all threads concerning the specter of subject matter areas that the concept represent, it has not evolved out of strategic needs, but rather out of a bottom up approach (flag waving) hand in hand with using the resources in terms of expertise that states offered NATO. This lack of control that ACT has had to relate to in regard to the COE concept has made it hard to manage according to NATO transformation strategic needs.

Despite elements of a bottom-up approach, it does seem that the strong logic of solidarity has adjusted the rather autonomous concept of COE to abide to NATO transformational strategic intentions communicated and coordinated through ACT. This indicates that there is potentially a lot of power in allowing states to keep a NATO flag associated with a specific expertise, although framework and supporting states do have a privilege in deciding how to administrate its capabilities and capacities. Although the COE concept does not seem to be driven by NATO transformation strategic intentions, the concept can still be an important strategic element in NATO transformation, and will be analyzed in the following sections in terms of looking closer at the concept's strategic relevance and importance.

Analyzing Strategic Relevance and Importance

This second assessment requires two essential elements that need to be considered together to assess any degree of coherency between the two. The first element is based on the first part of this analysis, namely the concept's rationale based on the four institutional logics within the COE concept and the following conclusions to draw a picture of the dominant set of reasons and what seems to be the logical base within the concept. The second element comprises of identifying some key guidelines in NATO transformation, which can be collected from the former chapter on "closing the capabilities gap". These guidelines in NATO's transformational strategy will be discussed first, whereas the actual assessment and comparison to strategic rationalities is presented later. The discussion and analyses of these two elements, and the key findings from research question one will then in the final part of this chapter be presented in the section on the COE concept's rationale and roles (section 6.3).

As presented in chapter four on "Closing the capabilities gap", it was the PCC that really committed Alliance members politically to bring about improvements regard a number of specific defense capabilities, an in accordance to an agreed timetable, and focusing on specific areas. It also seems that PCC and the Prague Summit in 2002 was really set the guidelines for NATO transformation, and laid the principles for how transformation should be operationalized. This is not to say the actual content of PCC is relevant today, but that the guidelines that the PCC statement emphasizes are still important guidelines for today's NATO transformation, as presented in the following section.

The most important guideline, and perhaps the guideline that the PCC in itself advocated, is that transformation is dependent on identifying essential components needed to improve

operational capabilities, and that these components are tasked and given ownership to specific members, entities, or clusters of the former two. With a particular focus on **national pledges to meet agreed shortcomings** over an agreed timetable, this guideline seeks realistic and attainable targets that tasks, and consequently commits, states individually or with other allies to specific capability improvements.

Another important guideline is that NATO must focus on **role specialization** in order for the Alliance to advance and drive transformation, implying that states must choose to direct resources to areas where they have particular strengths while abandoning the attempt to maintain some other capabilities. Such ideas however, run counter to the understandable principle of maintaining the widest possible range of state defense capabilities as insurance against worst-case contingencies. Nevertheless, it is one of the most important elements in NATO transformation, and often implies what is the third guideline, namely that there is an appropriate **pooling of military capabilities**. This means that multilateral solutions are encouraged, since it sometimes would not be rational to acquire the full specter of competencies and capabilities. Along with role specialization and pooling of military capabilities, comes the quest for **interoperability**, which is a fundamental principle for allied operations – namely that states must be able to operate and communicate together in allied operations and exercises. This guideline is important to achieve unity in command and effort in the battlefield, and is based on previous lessons learned from former and ongoing military operations.

The arguments for more role specialization and further pooling of certain military capabilities have been frequently supported by a guideline that seems to be more and more popular in political speeches, namely the principle of **cost-effectiveness**. This guideline for NATO's transformational strategy can be illustrated and explained in two ways. First of all, along with the goals and guidelines of transformation, a NATO command structure reform has also taken place. As a result, the North Atlantic Council (NAC) tasked the MC to conduct a Peacetime Establishment review of the Alliance's command structure in July 2006, including dedicated headquarters and other NATO installations, to identify a military structure that is more effective with regard to operational and transformational tasks, and more affordable in manpower and financial terms. An overall consequence of these reforms was fewer personnel warrants, and less room for subject matter experts in NATO's command structure. Secondly, cost-effectiveness means "getting more bang for the buck" for state defense spending. This

implies that Allies spend their money more wisely and effectively, and states are often encouraged to seek multilateral solutions to avoid unnecessary duplication of capabilities.

With the upcoming Chicago Summit in May 2012, one could ask whether the *Smart Defense* concept is a guideline for NATO transformation. The concept, which was branded by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh-Rasmussen, illustrates all of the guidelines mentioned above, but seems to be no more than a political concept that encourages Allies (particularly in times of austerity) to cooperate in developing, acquiring and maintaining military capabilities to meet current security problems in accordance with the new NATO strategic concept, which means pooling and sharing capabilities, setting priorities and coordinating efforts better. In other words, Smart Defense is a political concept that is used to sell and promote defense solutions that supports all of the guidelines of NATO transformation, and is not treated as a transformation strategy guideline in this analysis. Having that said, the strong encouragements to do “Smart Defence” seems to manage to gather allied states to get together and follow the transformational guidelines, and must nevertheless not be underestimated.

This means that the key thoughts, concepts and guidelines in NATO transformational strategy seem to be the following:

- National commitments
- Role specialization
- Pooling of military capabilities
- Interoperability
- Cost-effectiveness

Having the five guidelines for NATO transformational strategy in mind, a matching of these with the logics that has been identified within the COE concept (in research question one) will be conducted, and answer whether the COE concept is strategically relevant and important for NATO transformation. The following sections will first discuss strategic relevance and importance for a transformational strategy as presented in the former sections, and finally try to see if the empirical evidence can indicate any degree of the concept’s importance to NATO transformation.

Is the COE Concept Strategic Relevant and Important to NATO Transformation?

It is evident that the COE concept is indeed of strategic relevance for NATO transformation according to its strategic guidelines. The dominant institutional logics from the first research question along with the configuration of the COE concept regulated through the basic principles, clearly show that the concept's rationale is promoting and supporting the same guidelines for NATO transformation as presented in the former section.

It is obvious that the concept is configured and executed in the respective COEs, and that is consistent with the guideline for *committing the states* in driving transformation. Through the multilateral organizational solution consisting of framework and supporting states, the involved states are extra exposed and expected to contribute to a specific subject matter area. With the developments in NATO transformation and the command structure reforms in mind, it seems that neither state nor Alliance-led solutions are efficient solutions to address specific shortfalls and gaps in capabilities. In this respect, the COE concept and its ability to focus on something in between, namely clusters of states, it seems to be a sustainable solution that can achieve the guidelines. As a result, a sharing of costs is also inherent within the concept, supporting the *pooling of military capabilities* guideline. Although it is neither pooling nor specific military capabilities, the COE concept is coherent with the guideline in the sense that the supporting states “split the bill” on whatever costs that are related to a specific center.

Furthermore, the COE concept follows a strict rule of “division of labor”, and thus following the *role specialization* guideline, which means that each respective center has a special ownership to a defined subject matter area. This “ownership” however does not imply exclusiveness to a specific subject matter area. Even though a COE center has an area of expertise that no other COE has, it still has to relate to subject matter experts (and other defense officials) both in the NATO command structure *and* in state defense command structures.

Perhaps the most evident guideline is the foundation for the COE concept as such, namely the quest for *interoperability*. Getting states together to educate leaders and specialists from NATO member and partner countries, assist in doctrine development, identify lessons learned, improve capabilities, and test and validate concepts through experimentation are all activities that are in the center of improving Alliance *interoperability*. Above all, adjusting NATO doctrine (and preparing Allied forces to adhere to these changes) to new Alliance

political security objectives and guidelines and strategic military direction is of the essence within a COE, and further supporting the argument that the COE concept is coherent with NATO transformation guidelines.

The last guideline is *cost-effectiveness*, and is a NATO transformation guideline that is also very evident in the concept of COE. As a few of my informants argued, the whole reason that the whole concept is placed outside NCS is because of command structure reforms and reductions in personnel warrant and demands for cost-effectiveness and a leaner organization. Since the COE concept is not at the expense of NATO personnel warrants, it is thus cost-effective for NATO as an institution, and for the alliance as a whole. If it is perceived as cost-effective for the states that pay for a specific center however, is more uncertain, but for now the evidence indicate that states perceive these costs as natural to cover, and actually also as an investment since the advantages of paying is to get a NATO flag on their national soil.

By reviewing the five guidelines from NATO transformation, the COE concept is indeed coherent with the five strategic guidelines for NATO transformation. Consequently, it can be clear that the COE concept is of strategic relevance for NATO transformation in the sense that all the potentials and criteria for transforming NATO are fulfilled, but what about strategic importance? Can these findings be used to conclude that the COE concept is an (un)important element in NATO transformation? Answering this question would need a thorough evaluation on *what importance COEs have on NATO transformation*, which is an evaluation that is first of all methodically demanding, and second which is neither a focal point nor an ambition for this thesis. Nonetheless, the informants do stress two things that are worth mentioning to get an impression of the concept's importance to NATO transformation. First, they advocate the COE concept as an important element in NATO transformation, and second that the concept has an enormous potential in contributing even more and becoming spearheads for transformation in their subject matter areas if they are exploited properly. These two perceptions indicate that the concept's importance should not be underestimated in NATO transformation, and should also be subject for further studies.

5.3 The COE Concept's Rationale and Roles

Which institutional logics dominate the COE concept, *what role(s) do(es) the COE concept play in the field of defense transformation in NATO, and what is the concept's strategic*

intention, relevance and importance?? The main findings that answer the research questions can be summed up by the following bullet points, and will be elaborated in the following sections.

- The logic of defense solidarity (logic 2) and logic of defense pluralism (logic 4) dominate the COE concept, but the logic of defense sovereignty (specifically national interest) shone through in terms of organizing the actual COEs.
- In regard to NATO transformation, the concept seems primarily to play an identifying and supporting role, whereas it does not have an operative or executing role in transformation.
- The concept does not seem to have evolved according to NATO transformational strategic intentions, but the COE concept is nevertheless of strategic relevance for NATO transformation in the sense that all the potentials and criteria for transforming NATO are fulfilled.
- The findings also carefully indicate that the concept is of strategic importance for NATO transformation, but its actual effect on transformation should be evaluated in separate studies.

The first point analyzed four institutional logics, and found that the logic of defense solidarity and defense pluralism seemed to dominate throughout the empirical evidence collected through interviews with key COE staff/affiliates. The autonomous COE concept, which is neither connected to NCS nor state command structures, first of all seems to have a stronger loyalty and sense of belonging to NATO. The notable exception to this was in terms of organizing the respective COEs, in which the respondents made it clear that it is appropriate that framework and supporting states are responsible for *how* the centers should be organized and run. The opposing logic of defense solidarity on the other hand, was the dominating perception of what was appropriateness concerning that the COE's POWs are directed by (in this case NATO, and not state interests and needs). In the second pair of institutional logics, the logic of defense pluralism was clearly the most dominating logic, supporting the perceptions that partnerships and civil-military cooperation are of vital importance for the concept, and that effective information sharing is of the essence in carrying out what is expected of the concept.

The second point clearly showed that, in NATO transformation, the COE concept primarily played an *identifying* and *supporting* role in NATO transformation. The role that was *not* perceived as a role that COE had was in terms of executing transformation. The informants were clear on the point that since the concept was outside both NATO and state command structure, it only had an advisory role for NATO transformation. In practice the concept can present solutions and ideas for promoting transformation, but at the end of the day it is NATO's prerogative to make any binding decisions.

The two last points are from the last part of the analysis that assessed the concept's strategic intention, relevance and importance. I found that there was a sense of randomness and a bottom-up approach in the concept's development, which made it hard to argue that its course and nature was subject to strategic steering and leadership. Although the findings could not fully conclude that the concept was strategically intended, it does seem to be of strategic relevance in the sense that the concept's features match the guidelines for NATO transformational strategy. The findings finally indicated that the concept is important in NATO transformation, but since the research questions does not involve effect evaluation of the COE concept, this could and should be done in separate studies to gain a further understanding of the concept.

6 Summary and Concluding Remarks

Transformation in NATO has been a recurring and constant theme in the Alliance since DCI and PCC, and is an important theme although rebranded as Smart Defense. This thesis has sought to identify and map out different institutional logics of what is perceived as appropriate by key personnel within and affiliated with the concept, and to analyze the concept's roles and rationale, especially in regard to the overall transformation NATO. Two questions have guided this analysis, namely which institutional logics that can be identified on how the COE concept and specific centers s be organized, and what roles the concept plays in the field of defense transformation in NATO, and what the concept's strategic intensions, relevance and importance is.

The research question has been answered using a new institutionalist perspective, where the purpose has been to understand the dynamics of the COE concept. Constructing institutional logics and matching the empirical evidence to these logics and their respective theoretical expectations has consequently led to the analysis in which I have concluded that a logic of defense solidarity and defense pluralism are dominant, as opposed to the less dominant logic of sovereignty and the logic of exclusiveness that was not found to be evident at all. Furthermore, in analyzing strategic roles I have found that the two most evident roles the concept plays in NATO transformation are identifying and supporting specific transformational efforts. Finally, I have found it implausible to conclude that COE concept is strategic intentional regarded from a NATO transformational perspective, but rather is a bottom-up phenomenon without central steering. Nevertheless, the concept is strategically relevant for NATO transformation in the sense that it is coherent with transformational strategic guidelines, and also seems to be an important element although this conclusion needs further research and evaluation. Given these findings and conclusions, a discussion of some theoretical and practical implications of this study can now be presented in light of the "bigger picture".

6.1 Theoretical Implications

There are in particular two important theoretical implications that are worth mentioning. These are 1) fruitfulness of the theory of logic of appropriateness 2) whether the dominant institutional logics can be representative of a development in the mechanisms and dynamics of contemporary armed forces.

First of all the four logics employed in this study contributes to a further and systematized understanding of the concept, and the approach has been fruitful in understanding what the dominant logics are – and how they affect the sources of power, its meaning, and its consequences and sanctions within the COE concept. The logic of appropriateness as a base for the analytical framework of the thesis has managed to identify the rules that apply within the COE concept, and must therefore be said to be fruitful in this study. The institutional logics and the analysis have furthermore successfully served as constituents for the concept's rationale, in this sense the COE concept's set of reasons or logical basis.

Two particular episodes show how consequences and sanctions have actually changed behavior as a result of the rules for appropriateness within the COE concept. The first episode showed that the principle that all involved parties must have equal access to information (logic of defense pluralism) was superior, in a case where an information-sharing regime normally would have hindered certain parts access to an operational assessment done by a COE. The second one was when a state tried to trump through their national interest in a specific COE's POW, on behalf of the other contributing nations and NATO as whole. This nation was according to the empirical materials "put in its place", and shows that a logic of solidarity is strong enough to sanction any attempt to contest this logic. This illustrates the power of an institutional logic; it can outmaneuver formal agreements and rules in situations where it is not perceived as appropriate, and the new institutionalist approach employed in this thesis does indeed demonstrate an explanatory value in understanding the dynamics and mechanisms in the COE concept.

A clear limitation to the theory's fruitfulness and usefulness is its limitation for defining appropriate behavior over time, as it may change. As Christensen & Rørvik (1999) argues, longitudinal studies will show that new rules (and identities) might appear while old ones disappear, become altered or are temporarily downplayed. The theory does not address reasons and explanations for how these changes in institutionalized logics of appropriateness

occur. As stated in under the assessment on the studies reliability (section 3.3), if the same study were to be repeated in ten years from now, the results would therefore probably be quite different. This is a weakness in the sense that logics are not valid over time (and does not achieve reliability). Despite this, if a more or less identical study *is* conducted ten years from now, it might turn out to be a strength to the theory as such. This is because one can compare the changes that have occurred over time, and try to explain the changes in institutionalized rules of appropriateness between the two studies. Despite this not being a truly experimental research design in which *ceteris paribus* is achieved, the findings from a study like this might nevertheless address the reliability flaws of this theory, and even offer an understanding of the causal mechanisms of the institutional logics, this strengthening the theory.

The other implication is whether the matching of the empirical evidence to institutional logics, and particularly their theoretical basis, are representative of a development in the mechanisms and dynamics of contemporary armed forces. The main findings in the analysis does show that the dominance of the logics of defense solidarity and defense pluralism does indeed indicate that there has been a depart from more traditional notions on defense, as based on a Weberian notion of defense, where key characteristics were defense completely led from the state, and that the military was distinguished and separated from the civil society. Instead, the evidence points in the direction supporting Moskos, Williams, and Segal's arguments that there are tendencies that armed forces is going through organizational change that result in tighter links between military and civilian spheres, and there is a development of multinational integration of military, especially through international military organizations. Whether this is enough evidence to support the "postmodern military" that these three authors advocate is uncertain, but it certainly supports Østerud and Matlary's alleged tendencies for internationalization and privatization of military armed forces.

6.2 Practical Implications

Understanding the institutional logics will therefore make us better able to understand decision-making processes and outcomes in this particular type of concept. Not only does the logics offer good reflections on the dominating thoughts and perspectives, the analysis can (and should) also be used in making or adjusting strategies in managing the concept. It seems apparent that the concept can run into certain risks of conflict and ineffectiveness that run out of the four ambiguous and competing logics. One could however argue that addressing these

risks and implications have no place in an analytical study of this kind, but given that there were important practical reasons for why the COE concept was chosen as a study object, the practical implications of the conclusions and findings are nevertheless presented in the following sections.

Using the findings from this study can therefore be useful in discussing some practical implications that seem to be embedded within the COE concept, and that should/could be mitigated and managed properly. Two practical implications in particular that could be of interest will therefore be discussed in the following section, namely how the logic of sovereignty should be supervised properly especially in times of austerity (practical implication #1), and some obvious strengths that lie within the concept and that can be valuable if exploited further (practical implication #2).

Practical Implication #1: States Should Govern their COEs, but Beware of the Challenges That Follow Times of Austerity

Although the logic of sovereignty was only found in regard to organizing COEs, this discovery should nevertheless be taken seriously especially concerning challenges that show up in times of austerity. One of the informants carefully implied especially one important aspect in terms of organizing a COE, namely filling the positions and PEs as stated in a specific COE MOU and/or functional arrangements. In last few years most states in NATO have experienced severe cuts in defense budgets⁴⁶, and it is reasonable to expect that these cuts can and will lead to reduction in personnel in non-state defense positions. Since COEs formally is an independent international military organization that seems to be following a logic of defense sovereignty according to the empirical evidence, the involved states' obligations, and their obligation of filling personnel vacancies in particular, should be monitored closely and over time to see how cuts in defense might affect the COE concept and its rationale and roles.

A second aspect of the COE concept's autonomy is that the very autonomy in itself becomes a threat that should not be forgotten. Although the empirical evidence and the institutional logics prescribe very low probabilities that this autonomy becomes a threat, it is not given that a logic of defense solidarity will be strong forever. Following the same argument from the

⁴⁶ See specifically <http://www.sipri.org/databases/milex> for development in military expenditure % of GDP

former paragraph, state interest can outmaneuver the notion of solidarity in desperate times, which could consequently lead to “rogue” COEs, in the sense that they start operating by themselves and according to their own rationale and interest – and in the worst case in opposition to both state and allied interest at the same time.

Practical Implication #2: Potential Opportunities

The second practical implication of this analysis is identifying how dominating institutional logics can be utilized to identify key potential opportunities that arguably lie within the COE concept. In general, the COE concept seems to be undercommunicated, and making the concept and its services and opportunities more visible for the Alliance and its members might be an ambition so that potential new stakeholders in the concept can exploit it better.

Having that said, the following sections will briefly mention three opportunities in particular that were mentioned explicitly, namely the potential for improving ties with NGOs, the possibilities for strengthening intra-institutional cooperation between EU and NATO, and finally the potential for specific COEs to offer capabilities that can be exploited in (relation to) ongoing threats or operations. These three potential are all valuable especially for NATO since the COE concept follows a strong logic of defense solidarity. COEs must therefore be considered as a valuable asset in order to exploit any possibilities that NATO otherwise would struggle to achieve.

The first practical implications deals with non-governmental organizations (NGO), and is a point that was elaborated in the first part of the former chapter, namely that it seems that cooperating with NGOs might be easier since the COE concept is exempted from any type of traditional military structure. The example was in regard to the CIMIC COE, but it is clear that there is a significant potential of establishing cooperation with NGOs at the local level, and not least with central NGOs and IGOs on specific subject matter areas. These types of relationships could first of all improve the expertise of a given subject matter by including non-military aspects that might be neglected by a sole military rationality, and would nevertheless strengthen ties with important organizations that, of several reasons, never cooperate formally with either NATO or state military command structures. Particularly NGOs and some international governmental organizations (IGOs) thrive for a neutral, objective and non-military profile, which can arguably be maintained even though there is cooperation with a COE.

The second opportunity that the COE concept can offer is a “backdoor” for cooperation between EU and NATO. Due to the Cyprus-conflict and the challenges of reaching effectiveness and consensus is demanding in both EU and NATO, cooperation on the institutional level between the two is far from ideal, nor effective. Using COEs though, and as the empirical evidence have exemplified, can be a way to start a cooperation at a lower level by “dodging” the decision-making bodies on the institutional level, and consequently the challenges of effectiveness and consensus and the Cyprus-conflict. Since it seems that closer ties between EU and NATO is wanted from both sides (especially in times of austerity), this potential should also be exploited to the maximum – a potential that seems to be a win-win situation for both parties and for European defense as such.

The final opportunity that the informants seemed to be enthusiastic about, is giving the COEs concrete roles in (ongoing) threats and operations. The example given on the COE-CBRNs “reach-back” role should be looked further into, and assessed whether similar (or adapted) solutions can be tailor-made at other COEs, thus further exploiting the hundreds of subject matter experts involved in COEs. Establishing this capability and making it available whenever a given situation needs it, will lead to a more visible and relevant COE concept for the whole of NATO and its members, and perhaps also furthering the Alliance’s importance for traditional security and newer dimensions and conceptions of security. This might be especially important in times where many argue that NATO might have outplayed (or at least weakened) its role for article V operations and territorial defense and security. Playing on this particular opportunity might therefore support what Norway calls the Core Area Initiative, in which NATO continue to undertake operations "out of area", and outside Article 5, provided that these operations are firmly based on a clear UN mandate, but at the same time striking the right balance between "home" and "away" focus for the Alliance.

6.3 Conclusion

This thesis started off with the notion that NATO has to adapt “how it fights” to “why it fights”, and that transformation is the process for these adjustments along the way. The findings of this analysis have argued that the COE concept is a policy initiative with roles and rationale that is significant to NATO transformation. However, the scope of the study and the COE concept as such only contributes one little piece to the complex puzzle on the overarching strategic question on how to adjust “how to fight” to “why to fight”. Considering

the diversity and ambiguity of the new strategic concept from the latest NATO summit in Lisbon 2010, answering how NATO should adapt these diverging views is further complex – not least on how to match *how to why*. Although this study only offers an in-depth understanding of *one* specific piece of contribution in NATO transformation, it is nevertheless a contribution of the few in understanding actual outcomes from NATO transformational processes. It might be helpful in understanding transformation as a whole, but also be helpful to policy makers that can use the study's findings to identify strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities. Should this thesis turn out not be of practical or theoretical relevance, it will hopefully at least be inspiring for other scholars that seek to analyze and study alternative organizational solutions and contributions related to the field of (NATO) defense transformation.

Appendix A – Informants

Name	Rank	Position/COE affiliation	Interview carried through
Kjell Ove Orderud Skare	Maj Gen (genmaj)	Former deputy chief of staff, ACT, Norfolk, VA	Informal conversation October 7 th 2011, personal interview November 28 th 2011
Jo Gade	Rear Adm (ret) (kontreadmiral)	Deputy Director International Military Staff (IMS) NATO, Brussels, champion on transformation	Informal conversation, personal interview January 26 th 2012
Rune Jensen	Lt Col (oblt)	Senior staff officer, Norwegian Ministry of Defense, Department of Security Policy	Personal interview January 31 st 2012
Rune Nyaas	Commander (kommandørkaptein)	Norwegian Senior National Representative, Combined Joint Operations from the Sea COE (CJOS), Norfolk, VA	E-mail correspondence (questionnaire)
Geir Furo	Lt Col (oblt)	Former Norwegian Senior National Representative, Command and Control COE (C2), Utrecht, the Netherlands	Personal interview January 27 th 2012
Terje Roa	Lt Col (oblt)	Senior Norwegian National Representative, Joint Air Power Competence Centre of Excellence (JAPCC), Kalkar, Germany	E-mail correspondence (questionnaire) and follow-up telephone interview
Ove Sandli	Lt Col (oblt)	Chief COE for Cold Weather Operations (CWO), Bodo, Norway	Informal conversation, e-mail correspondence (various)
Jørgen Berggrav	Rear Adm (ret) (kontreadmiral)	Former SACT's representative in Europe + National Military representative to SHAPE	Personal interview February 29 th 2012
Helmar Storm	Colonel (ob)	Chief for Transformation Network Branch, ACT, Norfolk, VA.	E-mail correspondence (questionnaire)
Stéphane Abrial	General (gen)	Supreme Allied Commander Transformation, Norfolk, Virginia	Online Q&A through a security policy website called Atlantic Community ⁴⁷ , and received an answer on this that is used in the thesis.

⁴⁷ See http://www.atlantic-community.org/index/Open_Think_Tank_Article/General_Abrial%27s_Answers%3A_Part_1_-_Smart_Defense

Appendix B – Illustrative Interview Guide

1 Background and experiences, emphasis on NATO-positions. Specifically on what roles you have for /in relation to COE
2 Transformation in NATO has been and still is an important issue in the Alliance. What do you perceive as the most important goals and methods that the COE concept has and uses to contribute to transformation? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is COE significant in NATO transformation? • Are framework and sponsoring states coherent and in sync on these goals and methods? • Who benefits the most of your COE? •
3 What interests does Norway have to support this specific COE, and how do we contribute without competence and resources? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does Norwegian interests come in conflict with other interests and actors, which/who and how? • Do you perceive Norway is achieving its interests by contributing to this COE? Are we getting "bang for the buck"? •
4 Is there a conflict between NATO solidarity and state interests considering what your COE should work on? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does this conflict outplay itself with today's organization and work methods? • How do you as a Norwegian officer deal with these competing expectations between Norwegian, COE and NATO interests? • Why do you think host states establish COEs? •
5 How do ACT and COE cooperate, and how do they communicate? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given that COE formally is an independent organization, how decisive and directive are signals from ACT? How often does your COE receive requests for support, and how (quickly) are they managed? • What is the mentality on cooperating with non-military entities (EU/PfP, universities, research and development institutes, industry, etc), and how does this cooperation work? •
6 Anything unmentioned?

Appendix C – Executive Summary

This summary is intended for practitioners and decision-makers.

This study has studied the rationale and role of the COE concept, and sought to analyze it in light of NATO transformation. It has used institutional logics (assumption that the 10 informants of the study fulfill particular identities by following rules and procedures that they imagine as appropriate to the situations they are facing) as basis for the concept's rationale. This rationale and the concept's principles as such are consequently used to assess its role in NATO transformation.

The answers are summed up the following bullet points:

- A strong NATO loyalty and an inclination to include non-traditional actors dominate the concept, but the logic of defense sovereignty (specifically national interest) shone through in terms of organizing the respective COEs.
- In regard to NATO transformation, the concept seems to primarily play an identifying and supporting role, whereas it does not have an operative or executing role in transformation.
- The concept does not seem to have evolved according to NATO transformational strategic intentions, but the COE concept is nevertheless of strategic relevance for NATO transformation in the sense that all the potentials and criteria for transforming NATO are fulfilled.
- The findings also carefully indicate that the concept is strategic important for NATO transformation, but its actual effect on transformation should be evaluated in separate studies.

The findings have some practical implications, in which some are elaborated in the final chapter of this thesis. These are:

- **States should govern their COEs, but beware of the challenges that follow times of austerity:** The finding that national interest (under defence sovereignty) dominates on notion on who should organize a center. How this plays out in times of austerity should be looked into, specially how this might affect filling personnel warrants (PE) and live up to the obligations nations have agreed upon in a MOU or technical/functional agreements. The concept might also be exposed to conflict between national and NATO interests, and this risk should be continuously mitigated.
- **Potential opportunities:** The empirical findings reveal some possible opportunities that the informants perceive as natural to look into. Except from marketing the respective centers and their potential more, these opportunities are:
 - Engage more actively with NGOs, and exploit the relationship to the fullest through the COE concept.
 - Use the COE concept to advance closer cooperation between NATO and external partners like EU and PfP countries.
 - Assess how and where the COEs can be given concrete roles in (ongoing) threats and operations. This will exploit the many subject matter experts in realistic scenarios, and hopefully revitalize the COE concepts role in transformation and in NATO as such.

Comments or questions are most welcome at seanmlobo@gmail.com (Sean Lobo)

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