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The changing role of NATO: exploring the implications for security governance and legitimacy

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The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's (NATOs) changing role was debated in the face of the Strategic Concept adopted in late 2010. Two main roles can be identified in the debate; that of NATO as a defence organisation and a security organisation. The article analyses the implications of these roles for security governance and the Alliance's legitimacy – with emphasis on the novelties associated with the role of NATO as a security organisation. This development suggests an increasing need for security governance, something which is reflected in the debate. However, how for instance decision-making and implementation function in a more fragmented environment is unclear. If NATO develops its role as a security organisation new audiences are introduced that determine its appropriateness and the basis of the Alliance's input and output legitimacy changes.

Keywords: security governance; legitimacy; NATO; comprehensive approach

Introduction

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has, in parallel to the global security situation, undergone a tremendous development since the end of the Cold War. NATO is one of the most central multilateral organisations engaged in managing security today, and its different tasks produces roles that range from a traditional defence organisation focused on territorial defence to a more modern security organisation engaged in managing challenges to security on a global scale. NATO faces, however, particularly in its role as a security organisation, criticism from many audiences both internally and externally. Constituencies of member states and partner countries call for a withdrawal of troops in Afghanistan, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in the field do not want to be seen with NATO and parts of the local population question its presence in almost any theatre it engages.

Legitimacy is essential for NATO to fulfil its role as a security organisation. The debate in the face of the new strategic concept recognised that NATO is dependent on inter-organisational cooperation to manage security. NATO officials acknowledged that NATO has a problem in achieving cooperation with civilian actors. This implies that NATO is not seen as appropriate in the eyes of a subset of actors that may be of growing importance in modern security governance; non-governmental,

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civilian organisations. Such negative views may be the experience of many military organisations, but NATO's changing role gives a new dimension to it, as legitimacy problems such as these have the potential to inhibit NATO's ability to cooperate with these organisations and function effectively as a node in global security efforts.

In this article I discuss the implications of the development of NATO's role in the direction from a defence organisation towards a security organisation for the organisation's legitimacy and for security governance. The relationships between actors involved in security governance are of increasing interest, and legitimacy – in this article I speak of legitimacy in a sociological sense, meaning that an actor or action is considered appropriate by an audience (Coleman 2007, pp. 20–21) – is an aspect which is important in this context. The debate concerning NATO's future that took place in relation to the development of a new strategic concept in 2010 (NATO 2010b) is used as empirical illustration of the problems and opportunities that may occur if the development of NATO's role as a security organisation is fully realised.[1]

NATO and the problems facing organisation have been debated and researched extensively, with varying accounts being presented as concerns the viability of the Alliance in terms of managing the security challenges of the twenty-first century. The research community offers different accounts of the problems facing NATO and transatlantic relations more generally. The main focus is on the dynamics within the Alliance itself as a source of difficulties; the unbalance between the USA and the European allies, diverging interests, incoherence between norms and practices or an inability to manage risks in a functional way. According to Thomas Risse, summarising a broad account of the transatlantic relationship conducted by several researchers, the power and security interests of the transatlantic security community are in crisis (Risse 2008, p. 278). M.J. Williams presents a similar, but more functional evaluation focused on the ability to adapt to manage risks. Williams concludes that NATO has not managed to adapt to the changed security environment it faces, because the allies are 'unable to agree on the nature of risks, on what risks to manage and how to manage them' (Williams 2009, p. 114).

Much of the research on the role of NATO today thus focuses on internal problems. A different perspective is offered by Alexandra Gheciu who focuses on NATO's interaction with the external environment as a source of difficulty for the organisation. She argues that NATO suffers from doubts concerning its moral authority, which affects its prospects for cooperation (Gheciu 2008, pp. 6–8). According to Gheciu, NATO's trustworthiness as a norm promoter has been criticised as a result of a conflict between exclusive and inclusive practices and as a result of its inability to take a firm stand against various abuses of liberal democratic norms (Gheciu 2008, p. 86, 93). In this article, I relate to the discussion of NATO's external interactions from the perspective of legitimacy and problematise in particular the different perspectives of the various actors that are supposed to interact in security governance.

In the following sections, first, I shortly summarise the debate in the face of the strategic concept, adopted in late 2010, with a focus on the two main roles for NATO that was identified in the debate. Second, I discuss what the development of NATO's role from a defence organisation towards a security organisation imply for security governance. The article then turns to the concept of legitimacy and elaborates what NATO's changing role can mean for its input and output legitimacy. Third, I discuss

what can be done to improve NATO's legitimacy and how it is related to security governance and finally I analyse the theoretical consequences of my findings and discuss further research needed.

NATO's changing role

The debate in the process of developing NATO's new strategic concept contained many ideas concerning how NATO should develop to fulfil different roles and tasks in the area of security and defence. With respect to NATO's role, two main strands are identified in the debate; that of NATO being a traditional defence alliance and that of NATO being a modern security organisation. These two roles are, of course, in a sense two extremes. The NATO of today is a little of both. In the short term it is not the matter of choosing one over the other. However, it is important to analyse the consequences of the different roles and their implications for NATO's development in the international system.

In the traditional view of NATO, the main mission is collective defence and the arguments point to the centrality of article 5. A novelty in this sphere of reasoning is the US initiative to integrate NATO and possibly Russia in a common missile defence. The details concerning the idea to institutionalise a missile defence within NATO are still undeveloped, but the Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen increasingly argued in favour of this initiative during spring 2010 (Rasmussen 2010b) and it is also present in the Strategic Concept, adopted in late 2010 (NATO 2010b). The arguments put forth include the ability of a missile defence to protect Allies against missiles from Iran, the positive implications of involving Russia in a common endeavour with NATO and the US and also – interestingly – the missile defence as a form of unifying common NATO project. However, the missile defence project may be other than a solution. Large scale defence materiel projects tend to cause problems in the form of conflicts over burden sharing which are hardly unifying.

Many of the arguments put forth by the Secretary General and other NATO representatives imply an understanding of NATO as a security organisation. This role is perhaps best illustrated by the Alliance's mission in Afghanistan – which also stands as a form of inspiration source for many of the ideas suggested in this field. According to this line of reasoning, NATO as a security organisation needs to take a broad approach towards its tasks, both internally and externally. It need to develop further the comprehensive approach to security and cooperate and coordinate more with partners and actors of various kinds, both in the planning and conduct of operations (di Paola 2009, Rasmussen 2009c).

These ideas are seen as a prerequisite for NATO to be able to fulfil its tasks. It is, however, often difficult to achieve this type of cooperation and coordination, in particular in Afghanistan where civilian actors sometimes cannot even function due to the severe security situation. This has led to the suggestion that NATO should develop civilian capabilities. In relation to NATO's role as a security organisation there are also discussions concerning the need to develop NATO's partnerships (Albright 2010, Gahr Støre 2010). Both high and low levels of institutionalisation can be modelled depending on the group of partners and the issue at hand.

In the debate NATO's two roles are often seen as competing – which is not difficult to understand, given the increasing financial strain and the need to make priorities in relation to an ever broadening sphere of security and more and more

complex tasks. But what are the implications of NATO's changing roles, in particular that of NATO as a security organisation, it they are fully developed? Below I discuss this in relation to the concept of security governance and legitimacy.

Security governance and NATO's changing role

The literature has introduced security governance as a concept to analyse the complex efforts, such as various forms of conflict management, undertaken by a multitude of actors – sometimes asymmetric in character – to manage the security problems of the twenty-first century (Keohane 2001, Krahmann 2003). Security governance has been conceptualised as non-hierarchical interaction between different types of actors that are formally or informally institutionalised and share a joint goal (Webber *et al*. 2004). The concept has been applied to different empirical contexts, most often the European Union (EU), but remain undeveloped theoretically (Kirchner and Sperling 2007, Wagnsson *et al.* 2009, Christou *et al.* 2010).

Krahmann (2003) makes a distinction between government and governance – roughly characterised by ideal types of centralisation/integration or fragmentation/differentiation – and provides an analytical framework in which the presence of either is analysed according to seven dimensions; the geographical scope of policy-making (which may consist of different actors/levels), the functional scope of policy-making (the extent to which issue areas are part of a single system and authority), distribution of resources (who controls them and what does the coordination look like), interests (common or diverse interests), norms (supporting or questioning the authority of the state), decision-making (authority organised around a democratic government or horizontally around various actors and levels) and policy implementation (centralised or decentralised) (Krahmann 2003, p. 12). In her 2003 assessment of the transatlantic security architecture Krahmann finds that it is evolving in the direction of security governance. Below I discuss how the more recent debate about NATO's role, in particular that of NATO as a security organisation fits into this framework.

In the debate in relation to the adoption of NATO's new strategic concept in 2010, a discussion of the geographical dimension was very much present. The Secretary General received attention when he argued that NATO should become a 'forum for consultation on worldwide security issues' (Rasmussen 2010a). This can be seen as an attempt to place NATO at the centre of a global dialogue on security, to expand the geographical scope of NATO's policy-making, but also as recognition of the interdependence of NATO and other actors in managing security challenges. A central argument in the debate was that to manage its tasks as a security organisation NATO has to have functioning partnerships. Partnerships are said to need reenergising (Gahr Støre 2010). The need for partnerships has increasingly become evident in relation to the mission in Afghanistan and the question of establishing partnerships in different geographical directions and at different levels became a central feature of the strategic concept. NATO's partnerships so far largely relate to states or established regional organisations. In the context of NATO as a security organisation a broader perspective may be needed, involving other types of organisations. The more grandiose ideas concerning NATO as a forum for global consultation, which if realised could have led to more fragmentation and thus security governance, appears to have been met with caution. The member states that

want NATO to focus more on its role as a defence organisation are likely to be reluctant to such visions which could drive the Alliance more in the opposite direction.

With respect to functional expansion, NATO can be said to have been a slow starter. It has, perhaps as a consequence of the parallel development of the other organisations in the transatlantic security architecture, mainly the EU, been conveyed with the role of a more traditional military actor. In this dimension we see, however, perhaps the greatest transformation of NATO as compared to Krahmann's analysis made in 2003. The debate studied shows that although it is contested, a broad view of security is now present also in NATO – with discussions for instance on the need for NATO to deal with an issue such as cyber security. The best example of NATO's attempts at functional expansion is, however, the comprehensive approach. Ideas in this direction have been debated since the Balkan wars in the early 1990s and were, in a somewhat immature form – related to counterinsurgency operations – highlighted already in the 1960s (Galula 1964/2006). Galula points to the challenge of coordinating civilian and military efforts and how these are to be made effective. He points to a common doctrine as a way forward (Galula 1964/2006, pp. 63–65).

The comprehensive approach was introduced in NATO in 2006 and an action plan was endorsed in 2008 (NATO 2006, 2008). There is no detailed definition of what the comprehensive approach entails – but it can be interpreted as an approach to security that recognises that different measures and actors, civilian and military, state and non-state, need to cooperate in their dealings with the various aspects of a crisis management situation. The holistic perspective which the comprehensive approach represents have been accepted as a central part of NATO's crisis management and its future improvement and development was also a feature of the debate on the strategic concept. The NATO Secretary General stated 'In today's peace operations, we need to work together, from beginning to end, if we are to succeed' (Rasmussen 2009c). The comprehensive approach is thus placed in the context of NATO as a global actor and spoken of as a form of solution to NATO's new tasks.

However, while security actors such as NATO and the EU express their dependency on other actors, such as non-governmental organisations, in managing security on a global scale – the workings of these relationships (the functional dimension, distribution of resources and the decision-making) remains relatively unknown. Christou *et al.* recommend that research increasingly focus on the interactions among actors that take place in security governance (Christou *et al.* 2010, p. 355). Some empirical findings concerning inter-institutional interaction exist, however, and these indicate that rhetoric concerning cooperation and coordination does not always match experiences in the field, in particular if the theatre of operations is politicised (Burke 2008, pp. 62–63). This picture is confirmed by Rietjens, who argues that at the local level, civil–military cooperation is inhibited by the military lacking strategy and doctrines, knowledge, training, relations and sometimes interest in coordination with civilian actors (Rietjens 2008, p. 204). At a higher level, however, NATO has in recent years advanced initiatives for increased interaction with the civilian sphere, for instance the Civil-Military Fusion Centre hosted by the Allied Command Transformation. The Comprehensive Operations Planning Directive (COPD) (NATO 2010c) which is under development can be seen

as an attempt by NATO to adapt to a more fragmented security environment. The document is not restricted and signals awareness that other actors are important at different levels in the process of attaining various objectives and effects. However, much of the comprehensive approach appears in the directive to take place "in-house". How interaction with actors external to the NATO structure is to be undertaken are unclear.

NATO's largest engagement, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan has been at the centre of the NATO debate in recent years, and can be linked to several of the dimensions discussed here. The strategies in relation to NATO's operation in Afghanistan have evolved during the years since its establishment. It has developed from being focused on stabilisation to focusing more and more on combat (Shurke 2008). Following increasing violence in 2008 and 2009, transition to Afghan lead became a central part of the strategy in relation to Afghanistan in the autumn of 2009 (Rasmussen 2009a). This has meant that the link between security and development has received increased attention and focus, as have the need for civilian capabilities – and since NATO does not control these resources – partnerships with civilian actors of various kinds.

The need for a strengthened civilian effort and an increased coordination between civilian and military actors is a central theme of the debate within NATO in relation to Afghanistan and impinges on several of the dimensions of the analytical framework. The Secretary General has spoken of the need for a 'civilian surge' starting in 2010, in order for the mission in Afghanistan to succeed. The changed strategy suggests that policy implementation is seen as being fragmented.

The developments within the different dimensions are clearly linked. NATO's ambitions with respect to new functions are dependent on the distribution of resources, as can be seen in the debate about civilian capabilities. If NATO cannot find partners to cooperate with in the field, it may need to develop the capabilities that are lacking. The issue was brought to life in the light of the experiences in Afghanistan, where extreme security conditions have hindered many civilian actors from functioning at all. The argument goes that in situations where no other actors are capable of delivering the civilian capabilities needed, then NATO would have to see to this. This has spurred a debate about how civilian NATO should become. New tasks that border on civilian capabilities that have been developed in practice during recent years are stabilisation, training and counter-insurgency. The development of new capabilities is, however, not confined only to the external dimension of NATO's role as a security organisation but also internally if more focus is in the future directed towards article 2 and 4 of the Atlantic treaty. In this context, the EU may have a comparative advantage over NATO in some areas such as health and food security and disaster preparedness, but in other areas such as cyber security the US and the transatlantic context may be more developed.

The issue of interests in relation to NATO and its different roles are complex. The process of defining NATO's interest is of course characterised by different views. Although NATO's role as a security organisation is contested, for instance by the newer member states which want the Alliance to focus on its role as a defence organisation, the different proponents of NATO as a defence/security organisation appear to share an understanding that security need to be produced abroad. Depending on how the rationalisations for such action are framed, as being in the interest of NATO or human security, both may be satisfied. Different views are likely

to remain internally. The more challenging question to be asked here, however, is whether NATO shares interests with other actors? NATO can be said to share the fundamental interests of the major actors, such as the UN and the EU for instance in Afghanistan. However, at the lower level more diverse interests are likely to characterise the relationship among actors.

The same kind of situation probably is true with respect to norms, as has also been pointed out by Gheciu (2008). The problem intensifies with NATO's role as a security organisation. The strand of literature that critically analyse the possibilities for peace building and state building is growing (Laurent and Hagmann 2009, Egnell 2010, Michael and Eyal 2010). Robert Egnell has pointed out the negative implications of 'organised hypocrisy' in international state building, that is, divergences between what is said and what is done. He argues that this may ruin the legitimacy of international efforts in the eyes of the local population (Egnell 2010, p. 487). Michael and Eyal analyse the contradictions of peace support operations with respect to the emphasis of the different actors involved and the incompatibility of the systems of knowledge of these actors (Michael and Eyal 2010). Thus, it could be argued that in analysing modern security governance, more efforts should be directed towards the changing facets of security governance and its implications for institutional legitimacy.

Does the evolution of NATO's tasks affect the decision-making dimension? Rasmussen has argued that many international actors are to be involved in Afghanistan and that increased, better coordination is necessary – 'it has to be a team effort' (Rasmussen 2010a).To produce this, NATO is seen to have to increase cooperation with other actors. Whether or not and how this has affected decision-making at different levels is uncertain and further research is needed. So far, a rather centralised, top-down approach appears to characterise the discussions in NATO. According to previous research, NATO's track record with respect to civil society participation is not impressive. Peter Mayer has shown that NATO has no arrangements for involving independent NGOs in the organisation's activities. There have been attempts in arranging conferences with certain NGOs aimed at informal information exchange, and with respect to policy implementation there is limited cooperation at the field level in theatres such as the Balkans and Afghanistan. Compared with the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), which have extensive NGO participation in the organisation's activities, NATO's record in this area is meagre. Mayer explains the differences between NATO and the OSCE with the help of the resource exchange perspective, and argues that although both are security organisations they have different roles which imply that the OSCE has been more in need of NGOs legitimacy, knowledge and personnel than has NATO (Mayer 2008, pp. 122–124, 133–135). As is further discussed below, this situation is changing.

Turning to implementation, the debate concerning NATO's future as a security organisation features elements that suggest that NATO is indeed highly dependent on cooperation with other actors, developed partnerships and both civilian and military capabilities for fulfilling its tasks. It could be argued that NATO is reliant on security governance to produce security and attain output legitimacy (see further below). NATO's record with respect to civil society participation is, however, as was discussed earlier, not very impressive. The Alliance thus faces several challenges to develop its comprehensive approach.

To summarise, NATO's role as a security organisation raises issues of the functional scope of the Alliance, of new tasks and interactions with new partners. The civil–military interface of the Alliance receives a new external context. If this development is fulfilled, decision-making and implementation gradually move from centralisation towards fragmentation. This implies that we see a gradual development from government to governance in the field of security. In the following, I discuss what the consequences of this development are for the legitimacy of NATO.

Legitimacy and NATO's changing role

Legitimacy is a central concept in political science and during the last decades it has also received increasing attention in international relations. Several issues concerning legitimacy have been discussed in the debate leading up to the adoption of the new strategic concept, both explicitly and implicitly. Traditionally, the focus in the literature has been on the legitimacy of political authorities such as states and international organisations, more recently on the norms that guide their relations and why international actors comply (Franck, 1988, Hurd 1999). Gradually, focus in the debate about legitimacy can be said to have been redirected from top-down perspectives to bottom-up perspectives involving the audiences affected by political authorities. In addition, the debate on the effects of globalisation and the limits of the state turned attention from procedure towards outcome as a source of legitimacy (Nye *et al.* 1997, Scharpf 1999, Pierre 2000, Pierre and Peters 2005, pp. 115–132).

An organisation can be seen to receive its legitimacy based on the output produced in relation to the organisation's aims and/or on the input – that is, the procedures by which the organisation functions (Fritz Scharpf referred to by Keohane 2006, p. 3). As stated in the introduction, legitimacy is here discussed from a bottom-up perspective with a focus on audiences' attitudes towards an actor's appropriateness. Either the input or the output (or both) may thus be considered appropriate, and thereby legitimate, by an audience. Scharpf himself writes in relation to the EU and argues that for the EU, the main legitimacy base is in relation to output. With respect to input, there are too many democratic deficiencies (Scharpf 1999, pp. 22–23).

So far, the literature has emphasised the importance of multilateral organisations as a means for states to gain public support and receive legitimacy from both its own publics and the international community (Coleman 2007). The audience considered relevant for organisations such as the United Nations (UN), the EU and NATO has thus mainly been states. However, Robert Keohane has argued that the state as a source of legitimacy may no longer be sufficient and that 'multilateral organizations will need to find new bases for their claims of legitimacy in the 21st century' (Keohane 2006, p. 3). This is likely to concern NATO also, in particular in its engagements as a security organisation. The open debate that characterises modern security policies creates a need for politicians and NATO representatives to justify what NATO does and how it does it. NATO spokesman James Appathurai suggests that the process is increasingly transparent (NATO 2009b). It is striking when studying speeches and transcripts published on NATO's homepage how openly NATO's operations, in particular ISAF, are debated. Journalists appear to be very knowledgeable; they pose detailed questions, criticise various aspects of the operation and are able to recognise subtleties in the messages conveyed.

The deliberative perspective (Steffek 2003, Risse 2004) argues that legitimacy can be achieved through a process of engaging the different parties concerned with an issue in a discourse which serves the purpose of justification. In this context, the relationship between input and output legitimacy could be discussed. Elsig (2007) touches on this topic in relation to the World Trade Organization (WTO), and argues that too much openness in the decision-making process may inhibit the results of negotiations, and thus the effectiveness of the outcome. However, arguments to the contrary can also be found. Risse (2002), p. 270) argues that 'Public deliberation might also increase the problem-solving capacity of multi-level governance', that is 'output legitimacy' (see also Risse 2004).

The increasing need for legitimacy that appear to be facing NATO can be seen as a result of the different roles that the organisation plays and the different views that exists, both within and outside the organisation, on what role is the appropriate one. What are the relevant audiences that determine the legitimacy of NATO? Charlotte Wagnsson argue that five categories of actors may have an influence on the legitimacy of NATO; citizens, capitals and parliaments, the UN, troop contributors and partners; and 'receivers' (for instance local populations) (Wagnsson 2010). The legitimacy of NATO can be said to be constructed at different levels both internally and externally. Within the organisation we find public opinion and constituencies at the lowest level, followed by member state politicians, governments and parliaments. Various authorities at the member state level may also be of importance. Outside of the organisation, NATO's legitimacy depend at the highest level on other international organisation's views and acceptance. Partners and organisations that contribute to NATO's performance in the field are important at a lower level, as are the states in the area of operation and the local population.

Below I apply the input–output reasoning to the two conceptualisations of NATO, NATO as a defence organisation and NATO as a security organisation. They serve a purpose as they illustrate how different views lead to different conclusions concerning what role the organisation should play and what solutions are considered appropriate. They also inform the analysis of what NATO's problems are. Different audiences are also relevant in relation to the two conceptualisations.

As a defence organisation, NATO ultimately receives legitimacy through assessments of its ability to uphold article 5 and defend its member states. This primary task is likely to have been the main attraction of NATO in the eyes of its new member states, which have gradually joined since the end of the Cold War. It is also an important characteristic of the organisation that all member states are formally equals and retain the right for a veto in a process of decision-making which is inter-governmental. Both input (procedure) and output (credible protection of the member states) are in this context determinants for audiences' attitudes concerning the legitimacy of NATO. The audiences that can be considered to be of most relevance in relation to NATO as a defence organisation are the member state governments and constituencies, but the acceptance of the international community is also essential. NATO is well established as an international organisation in this respect.

If NATO is conceived of as a security organisation its legitimacy is generated based on assessments of how well it manages threats to security more broadly, both internally and externally. In this function, NATO produces security not only for the benefit of its member state constituencies but also for instance civilian populations in

other places. The actors that determine NATO's output legitimacy are thus to some extent different if NATO is viewed on as a security organisation as compared to a defence organisation. NATO's development as a security organisation internally has for many years been questioned by France, who has instead preferred the EU to develop its security capabilities in this area and wanted NATO to remain more of a traditional defence organisation. The debate in recent years has focused on the external dimension of NATO's development towards a security organisation.

From studying the debate concerning NATO's new strategic concept it can be established that many participants in the discourse question the appropriateness of NATO. This is present in relation to Afghanistan and concerns several levels both internally and externally. The Secretary General of NATO has recognised that participation in ISAF is an issue not fully appreciated by public opinion in certain countries (Rasmussen 2009a). The question of output legitimacy is also implicitly present in discussions concerning casualties among Afghan civilians following NATO attacks and possible war crimes and violations of rules and procedures following certain events (NATO 2009c). Relations with external actors have consequences for assessments of NATO's appropriateness, both externally and internally. For example, questions have been raised concerning whether the international community (including NATO) can justify its cooperation with the government in Kabul (NATO 2009a). This suggests a questioning of both NATO's input and output legitimacy in relation to NATO's main task as a security organisation: ISAF.

NATO is, however, not only faced by questioning from different audiences. There are also problems in achieving inter-organisational cooperation. There is a link between these challenges. The Secretary General has stated that NATO needs a comprehensive approach to manage an operation such as ISAF in Afghanistan. Both the UN and the EU are present, but the extent of interaction between the United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA), the EU Police Mission to Afghanistan (EUPOL) and ISAF is uncertain. A difficulty for the actors involved, both the international organisations and the non-state, often local organisations, is how to achieve cooperation and coordination. Institutions' assessments of the appropriateness of NATO are sometimes a factor seen to inhibit cooperation. The Secretary General has commented on how various actors view each other, and seems to argue that it has implications for legitimacy. 'Many NGOs on the ground keep their distance from the military, because they worry that cooperating with people in uniform will compromise their impartiality in the eyes of those they are trying to help' (Rasmussen 2009c).

Thus, other organisations may consider it negative to be seen in the company with NATO, as it can decrease that organisation's legitimacy. This can be seen as affecting NATO's ability to function as a node for coordination and may undermine effective pre-planning, as suggested in the following citation.

> The lack of communication with non-governmental organizations is also striking. I recently suggested publicly that we needed to work more closely with NGOs, so that their "soft power" could complement our hard power.
>
> Their reaction, I can tell you, was not very receptive. I think they are worried about becoming a party to a conflict. They wish to remain neutral. Therefore, they are often reluctant to work under military protection.

> I fully understand those objections. But we have to discuss this and work it through. Because in a situation where everything is connected, but where NATO cannot do everything, there must be more discussion and, where appropriate, more coordination between the military and civilian sides, from the planning stages to field operations. In peacetime, we must get to know each other and train together, for the inevitable moment when we are thrown together in a real crisis. (Rasmussen 2010c)

The Chairman of the NATO MC expressed a similar view: 'Many civil institutions are either unwilling or unable to cooperate with the military, to a sufficient extent. These problems manifest themselves at both the national and international levels' (di Paola 2009). The citations earlier suggest that key NATO representatives are conscious of and concerned that the military organisation of NATO is not considered an attractive partner by civilian institutions. As was argued previously, NATO is increasingly dependent on other actors to implement its comprehensive approach to security. Independent civilian actors such as NGOs (which are not partners to NATO in a formal sense) are thus a category relevant in constructing NATO's legitimacy. The importance of NGOs have been highlighted in the literature (Khagram *et al.* 2002), but in the field of security scholars still largely neglect their role and influence. NGOs have, however, views on how NATO fulfils its aims as a security organisation which determine their willingness to cooperate with the organisation. This may have implications for NATO's ability to produce security in a given context.

What are the reasons behind the civilian institutions' concerns? NATO representatives argue that NGOs do not want to (or cannot) be associated with NATO because they want to stay neutral, if they cooperate they may lose their own legitimacy. They also do not want to be controlled by another organisation such as NATO. The hesitance of humanitarian organisations towards engaging in integrated missions is well known, and concerns also the UN. Adele Harmer argues that 'The fundamental challenge to effective collaboration stems from the differing objectives of peacekeeping and assistance actors' (Harmer 2008, p. 535). Humanitarian organisations give priority to the humanitarian needs and consider it necessary to remain impartial. Military organisations such as NATO are set to solve political problems in which the population may be a pawn in the game against insurgents. However, Harmer also points out that protection of civilians is sometimes openly a shared goal between humanitarian and international organisations. Joint goals do not seem to be enough to explain inter-institutional cooperation, though. Indeed, it may be part of the problem. In relation to the more and more complex peace support operations, civilian actors are reported to question the military's involvement in development efforts and view it as competition (Rietjens 2008, p. 191).

What can be done to gain legitimacy and increased security governance?

NATO needs to establish security governance to manage the challenges it faces as a security organisation. At the highest level, the UN, the EU and NATO works – if not together, at least in parallel – towards the same goal, for instance in Afghanistan. Inter-organisational cooperation appears, however, at some levels to be difficult to set up due to the reluctance on the part of civil society organisations to engage with NATO. How is NATO to handle such a paradox? Indeed, it appears that NATO finds itself in the position that OSCE was – as argued by Mayer referred to

earlier – in need of the competences of civilian organisations, but unable to achieve cooperation.

It has been argued earlier that legitimacy appear to be at the centre of this paradox. NATO is aware of the problem, so what has been done and what can be done to achieve security governance? Is it with respect to input legitimacy or output legitimacy NATO has a problem?

It is likely that these two types of legitimacy are connected and that the dynamics that determine whether an actor is seen as appropriate has to do with both. If a civilian organisation questions NATO's legitimacy regarding output, it is not likely to want to cooperate more closely with the organisation irrespective of how its internal structures is built up. However, to improve output legitimacy NATO may need to adapt its structures to achieve procedures that are considered legitimate by the actors affected by their decision, that is, the input side of legitimacy. Since at least 2009, there appears to exist a conscious effort to make NATO a more important arena for global security, an effort which received a framework from the development of the new strategic concept. The NATO Secretary General Rasmussen has argued that the comprehensive approach needs to be improved in at least four areas; strategic alignment with key actors, making priorities; planning with these actors before the operation; bring security and development together in practice, and; how to involve partners (Rasmussen 2009b). The Secretary General's suggestion to turn NATO into a global forum for security dialogue can be seen as an attempt to increase NATO's political role and improve its input legitimacy. To find forms for this may be difficult. The reasoning concerning increased coordination that has been discussed so far seems to suggest a hierarchical thinking, focused on efforts to increasingly regulate relationships – as is suggested in the Comprehensive Operational Planning Directive (COPD) (NATO 2010c).

Input legitimacy may appear as the easy road towards improvement. However, one problem in relation to coherence in implementing a comprehensive approach on the part of NATO, pointed out by voices within NATO, is that relations between actors on the ground are not institutionalised within the organisation, and thus lost with personnel changes. Therefore, there is a perceived need to strengthen HQ level coordination. Pre-planning with civilian actors is often suggested as a solution to this problem (and others). This suggests that a top-down type of coordination is sought for. The question is whether this will work in relation to for example non-state actors (NGOs) who may be pragmatic and inclined to work with NATO in the field, but do not want to be associated at the HQ level. These issues were discussed at a seminar in Helsinki which focused on the comprehensive approach to crisis management. According to the highlights from the seminar, the idea of NATO coordinating pre-planning was not considered an option likely to succeed due to wishes to remain impartial. In practice, ad hoc solutions were considered more likely (NATO 2010a). Input legitimacy may thus require less institutionalised cooperation than envisaged by NATO.

Indeed, as suggested by Mayer, there are some elements of cooperation at the level of policy implementation in the field. This can be seen as a beginning towards enhancing output legitimacy. NATO may have to accept that these seeds of cooperation are not possible to centralise in the fashion the organisation would like to, but could remain ad hoc and at field level. Instead, NATO in its role as a security organisation must learn to work more bottom-up and find ways to channel

experiences from the field through its chain of command instead of the other way around – as is significant of the military culture. A comprehensive approach thus requires a changed approach towards the task and how it is managed on the part of NATO.

There seems to be no single formula for NATO's efforts at improving relationships with external actors. According to voices within NATO, written agreements may work, but NATO maintains good relationships also without these. With respect to non-governmental organisations there are many different categories of actors and forms of relationships with NATO so these are difficult to form into one package which fits all. For instance, the relationships between NGOs and NATO in the field sometimes need to be discrete, and are thus difficult to make visible through formal partnership arrangements.

It appears clear that NATO need civilian actors and NGO's – but what can these actors gain from establishing relations with NATO? If they are to risk their legitimacy by cooperating with a military mission they should be able to gain something in return, at least according to a rationalist explanation. Here, the security of aid workers can be problematised. Does the security of aid workers increase or decrease in the presence of an integrated mission? The perception has been that the insecurity of aid workers increases in such cases, but as shown by Harmer the relationship is more complex than previously assumed. She refers to research that shows that the insecurity of aid workers does not generally increase in these instances, but with respect to international aid workers it does. International aid workers are, however, not at higher risk in theatres where the US or other permanent members of the UN Security Council had deployed forces. Most dangerous was Somalia where the international engagement has been comparatively small (Harmer 2008, pp. 533–534). NATO experts argue that material resources such as vehicles, shelter and communications may be made available to civilian actors (Petersen and Binnendijk 2008).

Given that the audiences that determine NATO's legitimacy may have changed with NATO adopting the role of a security organisation, how can NATO increase its appropriateness in the eyes of other actors? The areas identified within NATO as vital for improving the efficiency of the comprehensive approach are mainly suggestions aimed at policy or structural changes. What prevent civilian actors from cooperating with NATO according to the strategic concept debate, however, is the view that they have of their own role and that of NATO. The reasons appear to be largely value based and can be seen as an example of the critical view of peace building. Against the background of the suggestions for improvement referred to above, NATO tends to focus on efficiency. According to NATO's reasoning, other actors are to be involved in security governance to increase the effectiveness of NATO's operation. The purpose is thus not to make these actors feel more included and share each other's values. The difficulties in evaluating the output of NATO's actions in the field should be taken into account. People on the ground may have an opinion on NATO's performance at a given point in time, but there are both short-term and long-term effects of a military intervention and the possibilities to determine whether modern war has been successful or not is increasingly difficult (Angstrom and Duyvesteyn 2010). Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh argues that legitimacy should be assessed both from a value perspective and an efficiency perspective (Tadjbakhsh 2009). If NATO is to realise its ambitions as a security organisation, it

needs to genuinely consider new avenues also with respect to input legitimacy and realise that efficiency is not the only aspect that determines legitimacy.

Conclusion

How to manage the security problems of the twenty-first century is a topic widely debated in various multilateral organisations. The research community have introduced the term security governance to conceptualise cooperation and coordination at different levels of institutionalisation, involving various types of actors. In this article, I have analysed the implications of NATO's changing roles for the development of security governance and found that a gradual development in the direction of security governance can be seen, but many issues are unclear and further research is needed. I have also addressed the issue of legitimacy and have argued that legitimacy is an important factor in the puzzle of determining the likelihood for security governance to become established. Common goals are not sufficient for actors to cooperate. Actors need to perceive each other as legitimate partners. Whether an actor is legitimate or not is seen as being determined by the perceptions of an audience. Legitimacy can be analysed in terms of both the organisation's input and output but these are likely to be connected in important ways.

Through empirical illustrations from the strategic concept debate I show that NATO's strive towards establishing cooperation among various types of actors, for example the comprehensive approach, is challenged by the fact that NATO's counterparts do not want to cooperate with the organisation. This can be seen as a problem of legitimacy where NATO is not conceived of as an appropriate partner. Compared with previous research, which mainly analyse NATO's problems as internal to the organisation; my argument suggests that the outside world is vital to NATO's ability to fulfil its ambitions to produce security. This has not been sufficiently recognised in previous research on the challenges of NATO as a security organisation. Future research engaged in problematising security governance should focus on analysing how various actors perceive each other and each other's practices to gain a higher understanding of why and how inter-institutional cooperation become established and function successfully.

NATO is increasingly conceived of as a security organisation instead of a defence organisation. An important element of this change of character is that the basis of the organisation's input and output legitimacy changes. More actors need to become involved in NATO's decision-making and share its values to perceive it as legitimate, because the outcomes of the organisation concerns audiences of various kinds, often far away. Civilian actors such as NGOs have been highlighted here as essential players for NATO in its attempts at achieving a comprehensive approach. They are also an audience that assesses NATO's actions. These new audiences have previously not been considered theoretically important in the security governance literature.

In the article various negative assessments of NATO have been referred to. What is it that these audiences criticise? In relation to the organisation's operations in Afghanistan, the actions of NATO forces have been the subject of resentment, as has its presence there at all – in spite of a UN mandate the operation is not seen as appropriate. It appears as if these objections to NATO's presence in Afghanistan go beyond the input–output dimensions of legitimacy which is common in the literature.

They concern not only how decisions to deploy forces have been taken and the actions on the ground but also the rationalisations; the *why* of NATO's presence in the country. This indicates that a focus on values and norms are increasingly important for an analysis of security governance and legitimacy.

What can NATO do to improve its legitimacy as a security organisation? The fact that NATO's different roles are disputed both internally and externally complicates the picture with respect both to security governance and to the legitimacy question. Incoherence in relation to this issue inevitably results in the problem identified by Gheciu; declining moral authority due to dissimilarities between rhetoric and practice. If NATO is truly to act as a security organisation, however, it needs to rethink its approach towards its environment. In this role, it is not only the interests and values of the member states that are important; but also those of the actors with which NATO cooperates. New forms of input legitimacy need to be allowed to grow in inter-organisational interaction and affect how NATO evolves as an actor. Evaluations of output legitimacy must consider more than the efficiency aspects of NATO as a military organisation, and also take into account how the practices of the organisation are perceived by other relevant audiences.

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Note

1. In relation to NATO's strategic concept debate, empirical material has been studied in the form of speeches and transcripts from press briefings adopted from NATO's official website (http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions_61136.htm). Mainly the voices of the NATO Secretary General (SG) and the NATO spokesman are being heard, but also the voices of other actors with whom NATO has some kind of relationship, including the questions posed by journalists – which indicate the public interest. The material covers the period from September 2009 until April 2010. The period studied was chosen against the background of the group of experts conducting their debate in face of the new strategic concept during this time period.

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