

# **Rivalry Among International Organizations.**

## **Bringing Power Back In**

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**WORK IN PROGRESS.**

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## Abstract

This paper is designed as a further building block to arrive at a theory of networking among international governmental organizations.<sup>1</sup> It is inspired by the puzzle that theory-oriented IR research has so far neglected rivalry as a constitutive pattern of relations among international organizations although rich empirical case studies of networking among the Euro-Atlantic security institutions point to the ubiquity of this phenomenon. The reason, it is argued, is a dual normative bias: the realist neglect of institutions, which prevents them from employing their toolbox to analyze institutions in depth; and the institutionalist neglect of conflict within institutions, which prevents them from analyzing dysfunctions challenging the very *raison d'être* of institutions. Consequently, I employ a synthetic approach that combines realist (particularly the 'enduring rivalries' research program) and institutionalist literatures (particularly organizational and network theory) to theorize inter-organizational rivalry, mainly focusing on causation and effects. The empirical background is the networking among United Nations, NATO, EU, WEU, OSCE and Council of Europe since 1989/90.

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<sup>1</sup> A first building block ('Towards A Theory of Inter-Organizational Networking. The Euro-Atlantic Security Institutions Interacting') was recently accepted by *Review of International Organizations* and will soon be published (also on-line).

## 1. Introduction

Rivalry is ubiquitous whenever social beings interact. Animals rival for mating partners, siblings for the attention of their parents, politicians for re-election. Rivalry is, though, not restricted to the interpersonal level. It spills over to the group level: gangs rival for local hegemony, ethnicities for sovereignty, parties for votes. Rivalry is thus studied in developmental and animal psychology, in social psychology and sociology, in administrative sciences and political science as well as in economics (Smith 1984, Alcock 1984). Rivalry is also ubiquitous in international relations: inter-state rivalries such as the superpower rivalry of the Cold War, the India-Pakistan or the Near East rivalries are widely analyzed in the ‘enduring rivalries’ research program.<sup>2</sup> As collective actors of multilevel decision-making, international governmental organizations are in this respect not much different from states, nations or ethnic groups. Indeed, the central claim of this paper is that rivalry is also ubiquitous among international organizations. Comparing current EU-NATO relations with a “sibling rivalry” (Burwell 2006: 21) thus makes sense.

It might be helpful to establish the relevance of this topic by giving an illustrating example ahead. It exposes major features of rivalry among international organizations that are later analyzed in depth.

The little Flemish town of Tervuren, close to Brussels, is fraught with contending symbolism, since the French, German, Belgian and Luxembourgian Heads of State and Government met there on 29 April 2003 to strengthen European capacities with regard to planning and conducting autonomous operations. The American-led Iraq campaign was in full swing. The meeting of the European spearhead governments of most vocal U.S. criticism added to an atmosphere of distrust unknown in transatlantic relations. International media focused much less on the expression of transatlantic solidarity that was issued by the four than on the highly political proposal to create a “nucleus collective

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<sup>2</sup> A good overview offer Goertz and Diehl 1993. One major critique is Gartzke and Simon 1999. Since this program concentrates on inter-state rivalries, intra-state and especially inter-ethnic rivalries are much less analyzed through a rivalry lens.

capability for planning and conducting operations for the European Union”, i.e. without recourse to NATO assets and capabilities.<sup>3</sup>

The Tervuren proposal seemed not to be capable to win a majority inside the EU, until a reported turnaround by British Prime Minister Tony Blair in September 2003 alerted NATO allies, especially Washington. U.S. Ambassador to NATO Nicholas Burns now publicly denounced Tervuren as “the most serious threat to the future of NATO”<sup>4</sup> and called for a separate NATO Council meeting. But NATO was not deemed any more the right venue to discuss what was perceived an essentially intra-European *droit de regard*. Thus, a trilateral meeting between Tony Blair, Jacques Chirac and Gerhard Schröder struck a carefully crafted compromise. It proposed the establishment of a small civil/military cell in the EU Military Staff (EUMS), which in “certain circumstances” would have “responsibility for generating the capacity to plan and run” an autonomous operation.<sup>5</sup> But this would not be a “standing HQ”. Rather, it would set up another newly created body, the Operations Centre, where the operation commander would be located. In case of need, both bodies would have to be augmented with national personnel. Resorting to the five national headquarters would, though, remain the “main option”. After prior U.S. consent, this compromise was endorsed by a EU Council in December 2003.<sup>6</sup>

Why did Tervuren arise so much transatlantic tension over months? And who exactly was rivaling in Tervuren? Strangely enough, the EU competence to conduct EU-led operations autonomously was long officially accepted by NATO and the U.S., lately in the “NATO-EU Declaration on ESDP”<sup>7</sup> just four months before Tervuren. Five headquarters were already designated, though only on the national level. What could simply be interpreted as a move towards Europeanization (a further step towards integration), rationalization (a permanent headquarter instead of *ad hoc* solutions) and equity (equal participation of the smaller EU members) did ring alarm bells in Washington. Why? Because already the Clinton administration had drawn a “red line”

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<sup>3</sup> Reprinted in Missiroli 2003: 79.

<sup>4</sup> Financial Times Deutschland, 17 Oct. 2003.

<sup>5</sup> Joint Paper by France, Germany and the United Kingdom, Naples, 29 Nov. 2003, reprinted in Missiroli 2003: 283-84.

<sup>6</sup> Presidency Document Entitled ‘European Defence: NATO/EU Consultation, Planning, and Operations, European Council, 12 Dec. 2003, Brussels, reprinted in Missiroli 2003: 322-23.

<sup>7</sup> Reprinted in Haine 2003: 178-79.

(Dembinski 2005: 74-78) between what is acceptable in terms of European autonomy and what not: U.S. Secretary of State Madleine Albright's warning to allow "no duplication" of NATO, just three days after the British-French summit at Saint Malo kicking off ESDP<sup>8</sup>, first and foremost implied no EU attempt to duplicate NATO's capacity to plan and conduct integrated military operations. For this capacity would "decouple" both sides of the Atlantic, undermining the transatlantic link which still is one of NATO's core tasks.<sup>9</sup>

Exactly this red line was crossed, or rather it was shifted in Tervuren. At the heart of the matter was the degree of autonomy the rapidly evolving ESDP would embody vis-à-vis NATO – just enough to satisfy the growing European ambition, but not too much as to undermine NATO. A nucleus for a European capacity to autonomously plan and conduct operations was established, not yet full-fledged, but with a potential to be developed into an equivalent to NATO's integrated command structure.<sup>10</sup>

A closer analysis reveals several layers of rivalry: inter-state, intra-organizational as well as inter-organizational, all of them interacting in stunning complexity. On the inter-state level, this was yet another French-American confrontation concerning the degree of European defense autonomy and their roles therein. Surprisingly, Germany openly sided with a staunchly Gaullist France. This long-term, multifaceted rivalry now came to a head on the issue of separate European command and control options, opening the specter of EU operations ultimately also against American will. Autonomy had become a highly emotionalized catchword – anathema for the one, lure for the other.

But the Tervuren proposal was explicitly "to be discussed" at the European Council, and it had stark implications for NATO. The Iraq war and Tervuren coincided and reinforced each other. Iraq strengthened the resolve to further 'emancipate' Europe from America, and Tervuren signaled just that. But loyalties on European defense cross organizational boundaries, which complicated intra-organizational decision-making. Tervuren exposed the intra-European as well as the transatlantic cleavages on ESDP. In

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<sup>8</sup> The Joint Declaration of the British-French Summit on 3-4 Dec. 1998 is reprinted in Rutten 2001: 8-9.

<sup>9</sup> Albright's Financial Times article from 7 Dec. 1998 with the "three no's" is re-printed in Rutten 2001: 10-12.

<sup>10</sup> "Inevitably", says Biscop, "the 'HQ debate' will resurface" (2007: 11). The final sentence of the trilateral Joint Paper contained a door-opener: "In the light of the lessons learned, further developments of the cope or nature of the capacity could be examined"; Missiroli 2003: 284.

the EU, it posed Europeanists against Atlanticists, underlining the gradual estrangement between France and Britain since Saint Malo and a corresponding rapprochement between France and Germany (Brummer 2006). Getting Britain into the boat was crucial in reaching the compromise on the EU level. But Britain was also crucial in winning the approval of Washington and NATO. In the context of Iraq, the Tervuren proposal reinforced the impression that ESDP was promoted by the Europeanists as a “counterweight” (Schmidt 2003: 6) to America and “its” instrument in Europe, NATO. For Atlanticists perceived the Tervuren proposal as a direct attack on NATO’s supremacy, highlighting the strongly diverging, fundamental views on the future positions of EU and NATO in the network of European security institutions.

Thus, Tervuren had to spill over to the inter-organizational level and spoil NATO-EU relations. It was one episode in a series of events qualifying NATO’s primacy in Europe. It highlighted the fundamental and painful readjustment in transatlantic relations taking place since the end of the Cold War. And the vector was not favorable for NATO. ESDP was maturing. The four-year founding phase of ESDP came to an end and the operational phase started.<sup>11</sup> Europe’s self-confidence grew. The four were now willing to openly challenge the NATO-EU *modus vivendi* just agreed upon in the sensitive package deal of ‘Berlin plus’<sup>12</sup>, which implied a tacit understanding not to cross the ‘red line’ to autonomous European command and control (Schmidt 2003: 3). Berlin plus was thus called into question the moment it stood its first test in Macedonia. The four of Tervuren signaled their increasing appetite for autonomy. For some, this was the logical expression of a Europe striving for a true partnership of equals between Europe and America, EU and NATO, which was not possible without stripping off the fetters of the Cold War transatlantic bargain. For others, this was the culmination of a French-inspired abysmal drive to erode NATO and the American hegemony in Europe. Distrust prevailed. NATO-EU rivalry got a boost.

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<sup>11</sup> In 2003, the European Union embarked on its first operation (Operation Concordia in Macedonia, March to December, based on NATO assets) and DR Congo (Operation Artemis, June to September, an autonomous EU-led operation based on a operations headquarter in Paris). It also agreed on the European Security Strategy in December (Council of the European Union 2003).

<sup>12</sup> The agreements of the Berlin plus package are classified; for a summary see [http://www.nato.int/shape/news/2003/shape\\_eu/se030822a.htm](http://www.nato.int/shape/news/2003/shape_eu/se030822a.htm).

## 2. Research objectives and design

Rivalry was omnipresent in the Tervuren episode. Yet, rivalry does not preclude cooperation of varying intensity. NATO and EU are cooperating today on a broad range of topics, ranging from capabilities improvement to operations like EUFOR in Bosnia. While this article concentrates on rivalry, it is important to keep in mind that cooperation and competition co-exist. The term “co-opetition” adequately grasps the intricate blend of cooperation and competition not only in business (Brandenburger and Nalebuff 1996). It rapidly gains relevance as networking among international organizations rapidly expands in international relations today (Biermann 2007).

My subsequent focus, though, is both on the rivalry pole of a relationship and on the inter-organizational level. This paper thus provocatively aligns two concepts which are usually neatly separated by IR scholars: rivalry (often called competition) as a central category of the realist paradigm, and institutions as the primary domain of institutionalists. My effort bridging the realist-institutionalist divide specifically starts from three interconnected puzzles: First, the institutionalist neglect of competition and conflict as an adverse effect hindering cooperation within and among institutions; second, the realist neglect of cooperation and institutions, which has prevented them from thoroughly analyzing institutions employing their distinct tool box; and third, as a consequence an almost complete lack of theoretically informed research on inter-institutional rivalry in IR.<sup>13</sup>

There is today a considerable and rapidly growing body of literature on inter-organizational relations in IR, much of it concentrating on dyadic relations among the Euro-Atlantic security institutions<sup>14</sup>, i.e. NATO, the EU (with its ESDP), the Western European Union (WEU), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

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<sup>13</sup> The only exception is, as far as I see, the recent literature on regime interaction. In contrast to regime theory in general, this literature looks at conflicts among regimes, especially among trade and environmental regimes. Since this literature though hardly discusses formal institutions as actors *sui generis*, conflict among regimes is defined very broadly in terms of norm collision (“if one institution affects another one’s development and performance/effectiveness” – Gehring and Oberthür 2004, 247; similar Stokke 2001, 2).

<sup>14</sup> Security institutions are “designed to protect the territorial integrity of states from the adverse use of military force, to guard states’ autonomy against the political effects of the threat of such force, and to prevent the emergence of situations that could endanger states’ vital interests as they define them” (Haftendorn, Keohane and Wallander 1999: 1-2).

(OSCE), and the Council of Europe (CoE). The United Nations (UN) is mostly included as a pivotal player in European security affairs. This literature is mainly empirical, sometimes comparative (Yost 2007, Nerlich 1994 Borchert 2001, Schmidt 2001, Peters 2004). Most of these studies discuss serious symptoms of rivalry, perceived as dysfunctions hindering to tap the full potential of inter-organizational cooperation. Actually, the more research penetrates below the habitual official rhetorics of cooperation, the more symptoms of rivalry are exposed.

Theory-driven research has not taken notice of this phenomenon. Indeed, there is a conspicuous gap between the abounding evidence of rivalry in rich empirical studies and its neglect by IR scholars of all paradigms. Actually, it is a catch 22 situation, as all major schools in effect purport not to be competent. For realists, institutions play only a “minimal” role in international affairs (except for alliances, see Walt 1990); they are “basically a reflection of the distribution of power in the world” and have “no independent effect on state behavior”, due to cheating and relative gains concerns (Mearsheimer 1994/95: 7; also Grieco 1988). International organizations are mainly perceived as instruments in the hands of nation states, created by self-interested hegemony, or as “arenas for acting out power relations”<sup>15</sup>. Thus, the incentive to employ the realist tool box for a detailed analysis of intra- and inter-organizational relations seems to be marginal.<sup>16</sup>

An opposite normative bias has prevented neoliberal and sociological institutionalists from analyzing institutions from a rivalry perspective. For most of them institutions are essentially “good”<sup>17</sup>, and only very few have pointed to serious dysfunctions and pathologies (Barnett and Finnemore 1999). Neoliberals were since the

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<sup>15</sup> Tony Evans and Peter Wilson, quoted in Martin and Simmons 1998: 746; for a discussion see Rittberger and Zangl 2006: 6.

<sup>16</sup> Rationalist Principal-Agent Theory is an exception, but negligible here because it does not discuss inter-organizational relations yet (Barnett and Finnemore 2004).

<sup>17</sup> Keohane ends one of his books with a very personal confession: “without international cooperation, I believe that the prospects for our species would be very poor indeed. Cooperation is not always benign; but without cooperation, we will be lost. Without institutions there will be little cooperation. And without a knowledge of how institutions work ... there are likely to be fewer, and worse, institutions than if such knowledge is widespread” (Keohane 1989: 174).

early 1980s foremost concerned to prove the significance of international cooperation<sup>18</sup> and institutions, refuting realist claims that institutions hardly matter, thus allowing realism “to set the research agenda” (Martin and Simmons 1998: 742). This basically defensive reflex following the resonating Grieco-Mearsheimer counter-attack has prevented them from discussing the vulnerabilities of their own argument. Institutions were all about cooperation; indeed, their *raison d’être* is cooperation. Rivalry within the institutionalist domain did not fit into that picture.

Sociological institutionalism has taken the field beyond the rationalist utility maximizing calculus, but has discovered even more mechanisms of how institutions further cooperation (Barnett and Finnemore 2004; Hasenclever, Mayer and Rittberger 2002: 136-154; Hall and Taylor 1996). Members share collective understandings and perceptions of the world which condense in institutional creation. Constant interaction and bargaining in these institutions then even shapes their interests and preferences further, fostering an identity formation process that leads to convergence, i.e. shared norms, collective interests and increasing trust. Socialization and social learning are major causal mechanisms. Forming the core of security communities, institutions can even converge so much that they develop cultures of cooperation which generate “dependable expectations of peaceful change” and thus tend to overcome the security dilemma (Adler and Barnett 1998: 30). This is particularly true for the European Union which is said to have overcome the disastrous inter-state rivalries prior to the World Wars and entered a period of post-Westphalian multilevel governance.

But how can we reconcile this benign view of institutions with the empirical reality of widespread intra- and inter-organizational rivalry? Do we need to correct our multiple normative biases towards institutions and integrate the realist notions of power balancing and relative gains, maybe even the offensive version of power maximizing? But then how is rivalry motivated? And what kind of power are institutions aiming at?

This paper is designed as a building block in an ongoing research project aiming cumulatively at a theory of inter-organizational networking.<sup>19</sup> A first exploratory study

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<sup>18</sup> According to Keohane, cooperation “requires that the actions of separate individuals or organizations—which are not in pre-existent harmony—be brought into conformity with one another through a process of policy coordination” (Keohane 1984: 51; see also Hasenclever, Mayer and Rittberger 2002: 32)

<sup>19</sup> On building block studies see George and Bennett 2005: 78, 112, 262.

looked at the phenomenon in total and concentrated on the genesis, rationale and relevance of networking, derived from an empirical investigation of the network of Euro-Atlantic security institutions and its dyads. It also looked at system effects of networking, mainly positioning and emulation. Though not systematically dealing with rivalry, the study shed light on that phenomenon (Biermann 2007). Subsequently, I will build on these findings.

The main objective here is to theorize rivalry among international governmental organizations<sup>20</sup>, concentrating on three subordinate research objectives: (1) to determine major causes of why inter-organizational rivalries arise; (2) to illuminate the effects rivalry has on the behavior of organizations; and (3) to elucidate the evolution of inter-organizational rivalries. I am particularly interested in recurring patterns. I am mainly building on the empirical studies already existing. Some of them even identify cooperation and conflict as the major pattern of behavior among institutions (like Varwick 2005 and 2006). But they do not conceptualize the phenomenon and thus do not allow for cumulative research across cases.

I will start with defining and categorizing rivalries, building on, but also diverging in important points from realist writings. The next section, which is the core of the paper, will concentrate on rivalry causation, specifically dealing with (1) domain similarity as a *sine qua non* for inter-organizational rivalry, (2) positioning as the pivotal causal mechanism for rivalry, (3) the quest for authority and autonomy as the objects of organizational rivalry and (4) rivaling principals as the main actors in inter-organizational rivalries. Afterwards, I turn to effects of rivalry on organizational behavior, looking at different intensity levels and organizational strategies to deal with rivals. My next chapter deals with the evolution of rivalries and illuminates three phases of rivalry evolution of the network of Euro-Atlantic security institutions since 1989/90. The conclusions summarize my argument in ten findings.

My research objective necessitates a pluralistic theoretical approach which synthesizes different available theories.<sup>21</sup> It is primarily problem-driven and aims at better tracking

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<sup>20</sup> Coming up with a typological theory of rivalries, rivalry causation and rivalry effects would be desirable. Yet at this early stage of research my ambitions are more moderate.

<sup>21</sup> The advantages and disadvantages of this approach were discussed on the last ISA convention 2007 in Chicago by Jeffrey T. Checkel and Duncan Snidal.

the complexity of causal pathways to rivalry. First of all, I do consider both realist and institutionalist literatures. For realism, I will mainly draw on the “enduring rivalries” research program which concentrates on inter-state rivalries; however, as I concentrate on conflict below the threshold of “militarized dispute”, I need more differentiation. Also, I do favor here the more constructivist, socio-psychological perspective as employed especially by William R. Thompson (Thompson 2001, Colaresi and Thompson 2002). From the institutionalist side, I consider both neoliberal and sociological institutionalism. But even more I draw on organizational theory and social network theory in sociology and economics, where a rich literature on Inter-Organizational Relations (IOR) and networks has developed. Since IR attention moved to regime theory in the early 1980s and later to governance, we have not only neglected formal institutions in general (the “ugly ducklings” of IR, Verbeek 1998)<sup>22</sup>, but also inter-organizational relations in particular (Biermann 2007). Thus, we do good to transfer what is transferable from sociology and economics to analyze inter-organizational cooperation and rivalry.

This conceptualization of inter-organizational rivalry is based on literature that analyzes the networking among the 25 dyads comprising the network of Euro-Atlantic security institutions. It concentrates on Europe, and here on security institutions. The findings are thus provisional. As cases are studied more in detail, also in other regions and other issue areas, some of the findings will need to be reconsidered and revised. Large-N studies might allow us to grasp better the scope conditions of my findings: how widespread and thus significant rivalry really is; what the overall balance sheet of partnership and rivalry in inter-organizational relations is; and what the relative weight of the causal mechanisms presented here is. The policy-oriented aim of this study is to help increase synergy and complementarity among organizations in the face of ever-increasing transnational challenges no one organization or state can tackle any more on its own. However, first we need to understand better what hinders tapping the full potential of inter-organizational cooperation before we can devise strategies of how to enhance effectiveness.

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<sup>22</sup> Despite the rediscovery of formal institutions since the late 1980s (March and Olsen 1989, Archer 1993).

## 1. Defining and Categorizing Inter-Organizational Rivalry

Rivalry can be defined as an antagonistic role perception which poses a Self against an Other and tends to drive behavior towards recurring conflict among the same pair of actors over an extended period of time. Of course, the intensity of rivalry varies, both among and across dyads. Some dyads are in general more rivalrous than others. And rivalry fluctuates over time, with phases of more or less intense rivalry distinguishable. The realist-institutionalist divide pertains mainly to the controversy of how the balance between conflict and cooperation is to be perceived – the fact that both exist is not in dispute.

Rivalries can be ordered hierarchically according to levels of analysis. In international relations, seven rivalry levels may be distinguished:

- the interpersonal level (e.g. rivalries of intermediaries in multiparty mediation);
- the group level (e.g. ethnic conflicts);
- the bureaucratic level (e.g. rivalries among armed services);
- the state level (e.g. enduring rivalries);
- the organizational level (e.g. inter-organizational rivalries);
- the regional level (e.g. the Middle East conflict); and
- the system level (e.g. the East-West conflict).

Except for the first and the last level, all encompass an intra- and an inter-level dimension, such as intra- and inter-organizational rivalries. Constant interaction is a constitutive feature of this system, not least because all except the first level entail multi-level decision-making by a plurality of actors. This makes decomposition of rivals as collective actors crucial.

Since agency in international governmental organizations rests primarily with the member states (principals), though not exclusively (international bureaucracies as agents), this level deserves particular attention. Thus, today's legitimacy crisis of the OSCE cannot be comprehended without considering its rivaling principals, including *inter alia* the U.S. and Russia (Gheballi 2004); and NATO-EU relations cannot be

comprehended without considering its “friendly rivals” (Thies 2003), including U.S. and France, Turkey and Greece/Cyprus. Sometimes rivalries even cross levels, like in Turkey-EU or U.S.-EU relations. All of these levels constantly interact, complicating any analysis.

In the realist-inspired IR literature, rivalry is often used interchangeably with conflict. Both are relational categories. But equating them neglects three profound differences. First, the antonym of conflict is cooperation, and these are behavioral terms in that they describe the quality of mutual *interaction*. In contrast, the antonym of rivalry is partnership, and these are perceptual or attitudinal terms, posing a Self against or close to an Other.<sup>23</sup> Rivalry and partnership can have behavioral consequences – rivalry tends to produce conflict, partnership cooperation. Rivalry and partnership thus are the higher-ranking antonyms.

Second, cooperation and conflict can be single instances, but rivalry and partnership are long-term endeavors. Thus, the “enduring rivalries” research program identifies “continuity” and “durability” (Wayman 2000: 228) as two major features of a rivalry, with “serial crises involving the same actors over time” (Colaresi and Thompson 2002: 285). Even if the minimal time for rivalries to exist is in dispute<sup>24</sup>, and even if the thresholds for the onset and termination of rivalries are also controversial<sup>25</sup>, there is widespread agreement that rivalries mostly span several years or even decades.

Duration, though, produces its own effects such as path dependence, i.e. the cumulative effect of former conflicts on future choices.<sup>26</sup> The result is that a rivalry develops its own constituencies and accumulates a great deal of “psychological baggage” (Thompson 2001: 562; Colaresi and Thompson 2002: 265, 269) that is activated in times of crisis. Cognitive biases lead to distorted information processing. Antagonistic images

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<sup>23</sup> William R. Thompson stresses this perceptual dimension of inter-state rivalries which brings in socio-psychological elements very much neglected by the ‘enduring rivalries’ research program (e.g. Thompson 2001).

<sup>24</sup> Most common is for coding purposes the dispute-density approach, whereby a rivalry is coded if x number of “militarized disputes” have occurred in y number of years; discussed in Goertz and Diehl 1993. An alternative, interpretative approach is pursued by Thompson (2001) and Colaresi and Thompson (2002).

<sup>25</sup> On that “cut-off problem” see Goertz and Diehl 1993: 157-158; Goertz and Diehl 1995; Bennett 1997; Maoz and Mor 1996.

<sup>26</sup> The observation that conflicts among the same pair of states are interconnected over time and cannot be singularized was one of the major stimuli for the enduring rivalries research program; see Goertz and Diehl 1993: 148.

of one another form (Vasquez 1996) and in-group solidarity and out-group hostility emerge. A variety of psychologically generated dysfunctions accumulate, including stereotyping, lock-in and entrapment (Tetlock 1998). Distrust becomes a major inhibiting factor for developing transparent and trusting relations. Image management gains pivotal significance to overcome these dysfunctions.

## **2. Rivalry causation**

One major controversy in the enduring rivalries research program relates to the structure-agency debate in IR. Are rivalries pre-determined by structure and therefore “lock in” quickly at the outset and are afterwards stable over time around a “basic rivalry level” (the punctuated equilibrium model)? Or do rivalries evolve gradually through phases over time in response to interaction among the rivals, with increasing distrust and hostility as well as the effects of past interactions feeding rivalry (the evolutionary model)? The first model privileges structure, the second agency or rather a relational perspective (Goertz and Diehl 2000: 202-205).

I argue that rivalry is triggered and maintained both by structural and actor-driven causes. Indeed, posing them as alternatives is misleading, as structure and agency are mutually constitutive. Rivalries have a structural and a relational dimension, and both interact (codetermination). However, this article favors the agency perspective, i.e. the actor-driven motivation of rivalry, without denying the importance of structure.

### **2.1 Domain similarity – the *sine qua non***

Let me start with a structural precondition for rivalry. Rivalry presupposes domain similarity, which implies a shared issue-area of actors with significant, though not total overlap of competences to allow for meaningful cooperation (Biermann 2007, modifying Van de Ven 1976: 32, and Van de Ven and Walker 1984, 601). Thus, two organizations become relevant to one another once they begin to overlap significantly, just as two scholars applying for the same faculty position become relevant for one another.

During the Cold War, domain similarity was very much limited among the Euro-Atlantic security institutions. Each had its own responsibility. The division of labor was clear-cut. Only when each one of the organizations started its internal transformation process in the early 1990s, did domain similarity emerge. Eastern enlargement and partnership as well as conflict resolution were the main areas of convergence (Peters (1997). Functional and regional overlap became a defining feature of the new security structure. Duplication is the primary causal mechanism.

Human agency played into this process. Khandwalla (1981, 411) argues: “An organization creates part of the competition it confronts”. Creating domain similarity is an actor-driven process. Just as the decision to apply for a faculty position ultimately remains a matter of choice, so was the decision of the Euro-Atlantic security institutions to duplicate others. NATO’s decision to create the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) in 1991, duplicating the format of the OSCE Council (Schmidt 1992: 204), was as much a conscious choice as was the EU decision in 1999 to get into military crisis management, thus duplicating NATO’s decision-making bodies and capabilities.<sup>27</sup>

In a structure of overlap, rivalry can easily arise. Just as companies producing similar products compete for market shares, organizations offering similar services tend to compete for their “share” in international relations. Thus, structure “constrains them [the actors] from some actions, disposes them toward others, and affects the outcomes of their interactions” (Waltz 1979: 65). However, disposition does not eliminate choice. There is no predetermination. Domain similarity increases the potential for both cooperation and conflict; it does “produce” neither.<sup>28</sup>

Francois Heisbourg points out that duplication takes place permanently on the inter-state level. It is “not all ... bad”; one should “be careful before pointing the ‘duplication!’ finger” (Heisbourg 2000: 45). Duplication creates redundancy, which implies more options to tackle complex problems. Whether organizations perceive themselves as rivals and act accordingly, depends very much on whether they perceive the situation to be zero-sum or not. Thus, the evident structural conformity of the Euro-Atlantic security

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<sup>27</sup> The EU created a plethora of new bodies remarkably similar to the equivalent NATO bodies: the Political and Security Committee (PSC) resembles the NATO Council, the EU Military Committee (EUMC) NATO’s Military Committee and the EU Military Staff (EUMS) NATO’s Military Staff.

<sup>28</sup> Rivalry is thus *not* the “inevitable consequence of the functional and geographic overlap” of NATO and EU (Biscop 2007: 3).

institutions today does not predispose them towards rivalry; it could (and does) as well lead to more, mutually reinforcing cooperation. But it increases the *potential* for rivalry. Structure in so far is a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for rivalry.

## **2.2 Positioning – the main causal mechanism**

However, another structural cause adds to it. Realists have identified relative gains concerns as one major factor hindering cooperation (Grieco 1988). It also seems to be a key for understanding inter-organizational rivalry, since it is inherently relational and competitive. And it is close to what social network theorists have identified as a rivalry for relative positions in networks of organizations (Aldrich and Whetten 1981).

Institutions are, as all actors, primarily interested in their own survival. More institutions “die” than is usually presumed. 30 per cent of all international organizations were dissolved between 1981 and 1992 (Keohane and Wallander 1999). In Europe, this concerned mainly the former Soviet bloc organizations, Warsaw Pact and Comecon. In contrast, despite much dire predictions NATO managed to survive after its Cold War primary *raison d’être* (the Soviet threat) vanished – institutional transformation, i.e. adaptability, proved to be the key for institutional survival (Mc Calla 1996; Wallander 2000). Transformation allows an institution to remain relevant. The more an institution is perceived as relevant, the more its survival is secured. The less relevant an organization becomes, the more its legitimacy and thus its survival is in question. When ESDP was created, the main functions of the WEU were transferred to the EU in July 2001, for it had become largely irrelevant and was reduced to what is called the “residual WEU”.

Relevance is though relative in an inter-organizational network as it exists today in Europe with a large number of overlapping, densely linked institutions. According to social network theory, relative positions matter in such a system. As networks emerge, a process of structural differentiation takes place. Each organization assumes a specific network position (Aldrich and Whetten 1981: 399). Cores and peripheries emerge. The profile of each organization is relationally defined. “Positional embeddedness” (Gulati and Gargiulo 1999: 1448) thus becomes part of an organization’s corporate identity. Most people today perceive EU and NATO as the core of the Euro-Atlantic security network,

whereas WEU, OSCE and CoE more on the periphery, even if measuring positions is highly controversial (Freeman 1978/79, Burt 1976). As the OSCE's and CoE's significance is perceived relative to that of the others, the recurring complaints to be sidelined by NATO and EU (Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung 2006, 6-7) signals a fear of becoming increasingly irrelevant. In fact, the widely used term "marginalization" (Peters, 2004: 399-400) in itself indicates a relative positional movement.

The whole network is permanently in flux. Positions are dynamic. Organizations vie to improve their relative positions. I have called this structural effect *positioning*, defined as the quest for central positions in a network. I hypothesize that positioning is ubiquitous in networks of international organizations, implying that this behavior is exhibited by all its members, and that positioning stimulates rivalry (Biermann 2007). This is what some have called "Euro-Vision Defence Contest" (George and Borawski 1998, 7), others "turf" battles (Yost 2007: 97 and 102). It takes place daily among international organizations.

Positioning is a system-induced causal mechanism of rivalry. Yet it still allows actors a range of more or less rivalrous options. For sure, striving for relevance is more than merely striving for survival. Organizations do at least not want to lose relevance vis-à-vis their rivals. They are thus defensive positionals (Grieco 1988). This seems to be the current primary motivation of the OSCE (not to lose further ground vis-à-vis NATO and EU) and of NATO (not to lose further ground vis-à-vis the EU). However, just as with defensive and offensive realism, what one might perceive as a 'satisficer', others might perceive as a "maximizer" (Mearsheimer 2001, Snyder 2002). For the smaller organizations, the post-Cold War transformation of NATO is not just about remaining relevant – it smacks of "aggrandizements" designed to "achieve an improved position", motivated by "ambition as well as fear" (Yost 2007: 103). This is true for Eastern enlargement (in the U.S. also often termed "expansion"), for the partnership mechanisms created with the Eastern neighbors like Partnership for Peace as well as for the move of NATO into crisis management (motivated by the rationale "out of area or out of business"). And the same could be said about the EU's enlargement, its New Neighborhood Policy and ESDP.

"Aggrandizement" is mainly the vocabulary of the weaker (or more vulnerable) side, which perceives some moves of a stronger organization mainly as an "infringement"

(Yost 2007: 106) of its domain. A regional domain that seemed after the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact to fall under the control of the OSCE, Central and Eastern Europe, was thus “taken over” by NATO and EU; and a functional domain, civilian crisis management, that was once also a prerogative of the OSCE, is increasingly dominated by the EU, forcing the OSCE to search for a new “niche” position in the evolving network (Wohlfeld 2001; Ehrhart 2002, 61-63; Otte 2002, 48).<sup>29</sup> Rivalry is thus not always bi-directional, perceived equally by the two sides. Often it is lopsided, more strongly perceived by one side.

### **2.3 Authority and autonomy – objects of rivalry**

Companies compete for market shares, politicians for voters, sportsmen for gold medals. What do organizations rival for? Other than the Cold War alliances, the Euro-Atlantic security institutions do not threaten each other. They are transforming into risk-oriented, inclusive security management institutions (Wallander and Keohane 1999). Because of their inclusiveness, the risks they manage are both internal and external. But the external threats are not other organizations; they are diffuse risks. Thus, the central defensive realist concept, security, is not applicable. It is no security dilemma which motivates inter-organizational rivalry as it motivates inter-state rivalry in an anarchic self-help system (Herz 1959: 157-159, Jervis 1978). The alternative realist concept of power seems to be more fitting. But what kind of power? And is it structurally motivated (Mearsheimer 2001) or rather anthropologically (Morgenthau 1985)? This section will focus both on tangibles and intangibles. It highlights the quest for authority and autonomy as major objects of rivalry.

I already identified relevance as the essence of what organizations strive for. A closer look allows breaking down what constitutes relevance. An actor is relevant if it embodies authority, which translates into leverage or “say” in world politics. The authority of international organizations is mainly predetermined by (and thus measured in terms of)

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<sup>29</sup> NATO General Secretary Jaap de Hoop Scheffer seems to be aware of these sensitivities. Referring to a recent inter-organizational meeting convened by the Alliance on Afghanistan, he assured the partners that this was “not because NATO wants to co-ordinate all those international organizations, but because NATO wants to co-ordinate with them and that is something else and something fundamentally different than the co-ordination of them”; speech at the Munich Conference on Security Policy, 9 Feb. 2007.

*resources* obtained, *autonomy* preserved and *tasks* assigned. I will subsequently look at each of them, but focus mainly on the latter two, for this is what is primarily affecting cooperation among institutions. Since autonomy and task assignment are closely interrelated, I will treat them together.

The *resources* of international organizations in terms of personnel, budget and expertise differ vastly – whereas the OSCE has a stagnating budget of 168.2 million Euro in 2007, the EU has a budget of 126.5 billion Euro. In times of strained budgets and much overlap of membership, this is what international bureaucracies rival for. Principals allocate resources to the organizations according to the relevance an organization has for them – thus, institutional preferences drive resource allocation. But prestige and legitimacy is also major resources, even though intangible. The UN with its “primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security” (Art. 24 of the UN Charter) and its unique North-South composition commands a legitimacy which strongly motivates all of the Euro-Atlantic security institutions to cooperate with it. Not doing so, such as NATO did in 1999, can seriously undermine the legitimacy of international action.

Those organizations which command prestige draw attention and have much visibility (Alvarez and Robin, 1992: 1398). European Foreign Ministers meet monthly in the EU, but only once a year in the OSCE. In fact, due to serious differences with Russia no OSCE summit has been held since 1999 and no joint ministerial declaration been issued since 2002 (Yost 2007: 95-6). The OSCE has been called a “forgotten” organization (Peters 2004, 399-400).

*Autonomy* has become a highly controversial catchword among the Euro-Atlantic security institutions. It was at the heart of the Tervuren episode and as such is the major source of rivalry among EU and NATO.<sup>30</sup> Authority presupposes *autonomy* – an organization with little freedom of action is neither a very capable instrument for member states nor a very capable partner for other organizations. The less restricted the capacity to act is, the more an organization can pursue its preferences autonomously. It is this

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<sup>30</sup> To quote Robert Cooper, Director-General for External and Politico-Military Affairs, General Secretariat of the EU Council: “Europe is a means but is also an end. We want to be able to act autonomously because that is what ‘we’ mean. Independence, autonomy, self respect ... are normal, legitimate policy goals” (unpublished, quoted in Yost 2007: 104).

flexibility that states call sovereignty, illusory as it might be today.<sup>31</sup> The quest for organizational autonomy is universal. It is the central impetus restraining “reluctant organization[s]” (Galaskiewicz, 1985: 282) from cooperating, in two ways: it deters organizations from cooperating in the first place and it hinders cooperating organizations to reap full benefit from it.

Let us start with the former.<sup>32</sup> Cooperation entails ceding autonomy, i.e. adjusting policies to the preferences of partners (van de Ven and Walker, 1984: 601, and Grusky, 1992: 965). It involves dividing tasks and thus responsibility. *Task assignment* reflects authority – the more tasks are assigned to an organization, the more relevant it is. Task assignment is both a reflection of and a catalyst for authority. Thus, for high-risk military missions, NATO still is the instrument of first choice, even though the EU has started to take over some serious peacekeeping missions such as EUFOR in Bosnia.

Division of labor opens up a space of own exclusive responsibility, but also forecloses spaces of other’s exclusive responsibility. As long as there is not much overlap, such a role division is relatively easily agreeable. But in a situation of considerable domain similarity, division of labor always implies foreclosing a significant space an organization could very well manage itself – and thus rivalry creeps in. For the OSCE ceding election monitoring to the CoE in a peace building setting thus implies not to utilize its own capabilities. This is difficult, since each capability and task has its constituency. Role division thus sanctions encroachment, with long-term implications for future task assignments, i.e. for the future authority an organization has. Consequently, guarding institutional autonomy and trying to “go it alone” has appeal not only for states, but also for international organizations. It is the anticipated costs of cooperation in terms of compromising autonomy that deters from cooperating in the first place.

This is why the recurrent debates about a predetermined functional or regional division of labor among the Euro-Atlantic security institutions remain inconclusive. No organization is willing to subscribe to it. Role division could in theory neatly delineate roles and responsibilities and save taxpayer’s money. But it would set a boundary as to how far an organization can functionally expand. It would commit an organization to a

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<sup>31</sup> See Bierstecker, Thomas J. (2002): ‘State, Sovereignty and Territory’ in: Carlsnaes, Walter, Thomas Risse and Beth A. Simmons (eds.) *Handbook of International Relations*, London: SAGE, 157-176.

<sup>32</sup> This part builds on my earlier research (Biermann 2007).

domain which it might find too narrow in future.<sup>33</sup> Each organization insists on its unrestrained autonomy of intra-organizational decision-making, specifically as concerns the vector of future transformation.

However, sometimes organizations are compelled to cooperate. In these cases, the actor-driven restraints are overwhelmed by problem-driven concerns<sup>34</sup>, i.e. enormous problems mounting which one single organization cannot master any more on its own without risking utter failure. Often it is a combination of several factors that helps to overcome the preference for non-cooperation: a strong need for the resources of others<sup>35</sup>, issue density and duration and painful learning through failure. The Balkan wars offer a prime example (Biermann 2007). Resource pooling and resource provision are the primary mechanisms of cooperation then, expecting that synergy will assist in problem-solving.

When cooperation among potential rivals takes place, we should expect serious dysfunctions. The quest for autonomy does not subside once cooperation starts. To the contrary, the struggle to maximize autonomy dampens the willingness to cooperate throughout. One of the focal points for rivalry is the negotiation of mandates for multifunctional peace building operations among the UN Security Council members and the respective organizations available to implement a mandate. In these negotiations the lack of complementary goals and role expectations comes to the fore. As long as burden shifting does not predominate (i.e. no-one wants to do the job), these negotiations tend to be extremely rivalrous, since the mandate has to lay down the division of labor among the various implementing organizations; and it also often agrees on some kind of weak coordination mechanism.<sup>36</sup> The negotiations between UN, NATO, EU, OSCE, Contact

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<sup>33</sup> Hoffmann and Reynolds (2007: 7-8) and Biscop (2007: 9) discuss this for the EU-NATO relationship.

<sup>34</sup> On actor-driven versus problem-driven concerns see also Vasquez (1996: 532) who differentiates between an “actor-“ and a “stake-dimension” in rivalries.

<sup>35</sup> This is the major endogenous motif for inter-organizational cooperation resource dependence theory has emphasized (Emerson 1962, and Yuchtman and Seashore 1967).

<sup>36</sup> Thus, peace building in Kosovo since 1999 is coordinated by a UN Special Representative, who is heading the UN Interim Administration for Kosovo (UNMIK). Except for NATO’s Kosovo Force (KFOR), which has a separate chain of command, UNMIK coordinates the civil implementation of UN resolution 1244 through its four pillars, each with different lead agencies: police and justice, and civil administration (both UN); democratization and institution-building (OSCE); and reconstruction and economic development (EU). Since Dayton, peace building in Bosnia has rested on a similar division of labor, with UN, NATO, EU and OSCE forming the core organizations (“Board of Principals”). The Office of the High Representative (OHR) serves as the coordinator.

Group and others at the margins of the Dayton peace talks in November 1995 are a case in point (Daalder 2000). Coordination problems frequently severely reduce the effectiveness of these action-sets (International Crisis Group 2001).

Asymmetry aggravates rivalry.<sup>37</sup> Cooperation is rarely symmetric. Bargaining positions differ. In fact, among the Euro-Atlantic security institutions asymmetry is the rule, symmetry the exception. Asymmetry causes one-sided dependence (Marsden 1992: 1889) and thus produces *demandeurs*. NATO is in need of UN mandates authorizing its operations, not *vice versa*. The EU needs NATO for headquarters and strategic airlift, not *vice versa*. And the OSCE can only finance its long-term missions with major grants from the EU budget.

Still, international organizations are very sensitive to avoid any impression of dependence. Instead, they put very much emphasis on the principle of non-hierarchical equality in their public diplomacy. The CSCE in its first communiqué which accepted the “interlocking institutions” concept of NATO Secretary General Manfred Wörner in 1992 stressed that each organization should have “its own area of action and responsibility” (CSCE, 1992: par. 24). And the landmark “NATO-EU Declaration on ESDP”<sup>38</sup> of December 2002 holds up the principle of “equality and due regard for the decision-making autonomy and interests” of both partners.

Such statements mask the profound inequality among organizations. As subordination is unwelcome, there is a continuous struggle for autonomy and control. The weaker side tries to increase its room of maneuver, the stronger to forestall this in order to perpetuate the favorable equation. Meaningful, in-depth cooperation is very difficult to achieve in this scenario, especially if exogenous, problem-induced pressures subside.

In fact, practical cooperation can even have the adverse effect of reinforcing the quest for autonomy, deterring future cooperation. When the mounting problems in Bosnia forced NATO and the UN to cooperate under the so-called “dual-key arrangements” from 1993 to 1995, NATO lacked the authority to autonomously initiate air strikes against Bosnian Serb positions. Instead, it needed prior consent from the UN Headquarter and its operations commander on the ground in Bosnia. For NATO, this proved so agonizing that

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<sup>37</sup> This contradicts some realist writing which argues that asymmetric power balances minimize rivalry; rivals have to “play in the same league” to be perceived as serious rivals (Thompson 200: 560).

<sup>38</sup> Reprinted in Haine 2003: 178-79.

since Dayton (where the UN was sidelined) NATO insists on “unified command and control” of its forces, in effect creating the “dualism” of military and civilian implementation that today predominates in Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan (Yost 2007). Some have called this the “autonomy model”, insisting that NATO “is not willing to subordinate itself to the UN under all conditions” (Leurdijk 2004: 26-27).

Reducing dependence is a prime concern in such settings of asymmetric cooperation. There are at least four strategies to do so: diversification, substitution, duplication and issue linkage. *Diversification* aims at tapping several resource providers in order to reduce the reliance on one (Galaskiewicz 1985: 285). The Saint Malo double-track philosophy for ESDP, allowing military operations both with recourse to NATO assets and autonomously, served this purpose.<sup>39</sup> *Substitution* implies that an externally provided resource is replaced through intra-organizational adaptation with more readily available means (Yuchtman and Seashore, 1967: 901). This strategy considerably drives ESDP’s growth today: the more the EU builds up its own institutional capacities and military capabilities, literally climbing up the “Petersberg ladder”<sup>40</sup>, the more it is able to substitute NATO assets with own assets, thus circumventing the obligations and uncertainties the NATO track carries<sup>41</sup> – up to the point where Berlin plus could become a “last resort” and largely irrelevant (Yost 2007: 62-63). Substitution can, but need not take the form of *duplication*, which means copying the resources so far provided by others in order to increase one’s autonomy. Whereas NATO repeatedly warns against “unnecessary duplication” in order to keep control, the EU deems many of its measures

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<sup>39</sup> Simply eliminating or negating the need for a resource another organization provided so far is a subcategory of substitution. This is what NATO practiced when it freed itself from the UN “key” since Dayton, and this is what NATO also did in 1999 when it conducted operation Allied Force against the Former Republic of Yugoslavia without a (so far undisputed) Security Council authorization.

<sup>40</sup> The Petersberg Declaration (1992) of the WEU, which was later transferred to the EU, foresees EU military operations in humanitarian and rescue, peace keeping and peace making tasks (not collective defense). The Constitutional Treaty added some new categories of operations, but was not ratified. Due to the ‘capabilities gap’ the EU depends heavily on NATO assets for high-intensity operations in the upper Petersberg spectrum. The more the EU invests in better capabilities, the more it is able to substitute for the NATO assets.

<sup>41</sup> The obligations and uncertainties are mainly due to the fact that NATO reserved the right to (1) decide on a case-by-case basis whether to release requested assets for EU-led operations; (2) control an EU-led operation via assigning the DSACEUR as operations commander and demanding full transparency; and (3) withdraw its assets any time in situations of own need. The promise of “assured access” and the pre-identification of assets, capabilities and command options do alleviate, but not nullify these problems for the EU (Otte, 2002: 44-45, Heise and Schmidt 2005, 7-8).

necessary to increase its autonomy vis-à-vis NATO.<sup>42</sup> Finally, with *issue linkage* an organization tries to re-balance an unfavorable relationship by providing resources of comparable value to another organization, often in a different domain. The current discussion of a “Berlin plus in reverse”, making EU civilian crisis management assets available to NATO (Biscop 2007: 15), is such an attempt at issue-linkage – which some in NATO, ironically, dislike because it “would smack of a dependence” on EU assets (Yost 2007: 62).

Each of these strategies has the potential to reduce rivalry by deconflicting a relationship. But it can also spur rivalry for it challenges the control of the other and thus the hierarchy prevalent so far. The current upsurge of terms like “Europeanization” (introduced in the 1980s) and “emancipation” and “autonomy” (still taboo in the 1990s) thus excites NATO and the U.S. to apply stronger control mechanisms to avert exactly this.

## 2.4 Rivaling Principals

Since January 2007, 21 of the 26 NATO members are also EU members – Canada, Iceland, Norway, Turkey and the United States are the five non-EU NATO members. *Vice versa*, of the 27 EU members six are not NATO members – Austria, Cyprus, Ireland, Finland, Malta and Sweden. Given this strong overlap, Peter Eickenboom reasons that EU and NATO “cannot be rivals” (Eickenboom 2004: 23). This apodictic statement of a former German State Secretary simplifies a much more complex puzzle. Can organizations which are to a large degree identical in membership – and that is true for all of the Euro-Atlantic security institutions – become rivals? The categorical response here is yes – mainly because of what I call *rivaling principals*. And the reasons are twofold: First, because principals can instrumentalize their intra-organizational veto power to disrupt relations with another organization, pursuing what they perceive as national interests (*hostage taking*). And second, because principals rank institutional

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<sup>42</sup> The recent decision to create a huge mission support department attached to the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, with the perspective of establishing an own command for peace operations in New York, was perceived by seasoned NATO observers as a move duplicating NATO’s integrated military structure to reduce the UN’s dependence on NATO (Yost 2007).

preferences and in a situation of institutional choice select the forum which best fits their purposes (*forum shopping*).

Up to now, I have treated organizations mainly as black boxes. However, in order to grasp further dimensions of rivalry, we need now to open these boxes. International organizations are composed of member states (the principals) and international bureaucracies (agents), which can be disaggregated further in different intra-organizational groups and key officials. Inter-organizational cooperation as well as rivalry is the result of complex intra-organizational preference building processes, whereby one of those actors gains preponderance internally in defining the relationship with another organization. The driving force can be a hegemon or key member state or a group thereof, it can be the international bureaucracy or even an intra-organizational group or a key official, especially an inter-organizational boundary-spanner. Often, some of them work at cross-purposes and counter-balance themselves.

Agency should be very different from case to case. Those who perceive international organizations primarily as an instrument of the foreign policy of member states, especially of hegemonic powers, or as an arena of inter-state bargaining to reduce transaction costs (Archer 1993, 130-52, and Rittberger and Zangl 2006, 6), will look for rivalry causation first on the member state level. Those who apply a principal-agent or social institutionalist lens (Barnett and Finnemore 1999 and 2004) and conceptualize international organizations as purposive corporate actors with a distinct, autonomous impact on international affairs will look more for rivalry caused by international bureaucracies. However, since the images of instrument and arena still capture the basic reality of the intra-organizational distribution of power in most organizations and since member states have not ceded much autonomy to international bureaucracies in security affairs yet, we will focus here on the principals<sup>43</sup>, being aware though that this is a reduction of a highly complex reality. Let us now look at the two causal mechanisms consecutively.

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<sup>43</sup> David Yost asserts: “National political factors constitute the greatest constraints on cooperation( (Yost 2007: 140)

*First, hostage taking.* Decision-making in security institutions is mostly based on the consensus rule. Unanimity is reigning in the UN Security Council, NATO (eased by the ‘silence procedure’), OSCE, CoW, WEU and the EU (eased by opt-out options). Intergovernmentalism dominates. The result is that each member state, small or large, is a potential veto player with the power to shape an inter-organizational relationship according to own, sometimes parochial interests.

This has proved to be an invitation for misuse, especially to those member states only represented in one of the concerned organizations. The Turkish-Cypriot conflict in NATO and EU demonstrates how much individual member states can block any decision and in effect instrumentalize organizations for their national agendas. As the Alliance was sorting out its future relations with the EU – in itself an extremely arduous process not least to U.S. reservations – a policy turn in Ankara in early 2000 began to stall the negotiations on the Berlin plus agreement. As a WEU Associate member with considerable competencies, Turkey was dissatisfied with the EU concessions on how much to allow the non-EU members of NATO a say in the planning and conduct of EU-led operations. The Turkish “blocking posture” (Kupferschmidt 2006: 14 and 24) went so far as to demand that Turkey be not only invited, but entitled to take part in all EU operations even when NATO assets are not transferred (Missiroli 2002: 16). Surely, the growing estrangement between Turkey and the EU due to the further postponement of accession negotiations after the Helsinki December 1999 Summit decision to offer Turkey the candidacy status played into that. At the end, Turkey blocked any serious progress in NATO-EU relations for more than two years, isolating itself within NATO and antagonizing both the EU and the U.S.

This episode had and has an after play. After a compromise solution was finally found and the Berlin plus agreement signed in March 2003, NATO-EU cooperation indeed intensified. However, the EU accession of Cyprus and Malta in 2004 triggered another drawback in NATO-EU relations caused by hostage taking (Hoffmann and Reynolds 2007: 3-4). The ‘Annan Plan’ for re-uniting Cyprus had failed by that time and Turkey still did not recognize Greek Cyprus. Since Cyprus and Malta were neither NATO nor PfP member and thus had not concluded a security agreement with NATO, Turkey insisted on their exclusion from any official NATO-EU meeting. Ankara also vetoed any

sharing of classified information with both (Burwell et al. 2006: 25). Cyprus and Malta, backed by the EU, reacted by applying an extremely restrictive interpretation of Berlin plus, in effect limiting NATO-EU exchange to one topic: EU-led operations based on NATO assets and capabilities. The only running operation of that kind was and is Operation Althea (EUFOR) in Bosnia. The vast array of other topics of common concern between both organizations (proliferation, terrorism, Darfur etc.) can thus not be discussed in any formal NATO-EU body. Since December 2003 no formal meetings of NATO and EU Foreign Ministers have taken place (Yost 2007: 65).<sup>44</sup>

Thus, the EU-NATO framework is undermined by an ongoing “dual veto” (Hoffmann and Reynold 2007: 4) of two rivaling principals. The stalemate plays into the hands of other principals like France more interested in advancing ESDP autonomy than in deepening NATO-EU cooperation. Both organizations in this case have indeed become mainly instruments in the hands of rivaling principals, taking inter-organizational relations “hostage” (Missiroli 2002: 20) to pursue their inter-state rivalry. The antagonistic role perception is not necessarily shared by the organization as a whole, but some of its members are able to hijack “their” organization to the detriment of the whole. Actor-driven special interests, guided by much zero-sum thinking, override the need for problem-driven cooperation.

Second, *forum shopping*. The “dual vetos” of Turkey and Cyprus admittedly are an extreme case of narrowly defined national interests among rivaling principals. But the episode highlights how organizations on the track of cooperation can become hostage of conflicting national agendas. Turkey and Cyprus are each only represented in one of the two organizations interacting. However, rivaling principals do cause inter-organizational rivalry even when they are represented in both organizations. That is in need of explanation as these principals should have an interest in inter-organizational relations as harmonious as possible. However, this is not always the case. The reason is diverging institutional preferences (Berenskoetter and Giegerich 2007, Koremnos et al. 2001: 767). Cooperation among organizations with a considerable overlap of membership poses

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<sup>44</sup> In order to “work around” this problem, the locus of cooperation has shifted to informal ministerial meetings “at 32” (called “transatlantic events”), which of course do not allow any joint decision-making (Yost 2007: 68-69).

puzzling questions – take NATO-EU relations: How does the German ambassador in the NATO Council negotiate with the German ambassador in the Political and Security Committee of the EU? As 21 NATO ambassadors get together with 21 EU colleagues of their own nationality in these meetings, do national Foreign Ministries devise identical instructions for them in both bodies?

Not necessarily. Institutions are ranked according to preferences, and ranking is deduced from relevance. Resources are granted, tasks assigned and attention paid accordingly. The permanent U.S. delay in paying its share of the UN budget, unthinkable for NATO, reflects the low standing this organization has in Washington. As long as organizations do not overlap, it is difficult to shift resources, tasks and attention from one organization to another. During the Cold War, only NATO was available for collective defense. Whether members such as France liked the Alliance or not, did not matter much – there was no option to shift French loyalty to another organization. The only alternative was leaving the Alliance altogether or parts thereof (as France did in 1966 when leaving the integrated military structure).

Yet, when the Europeans agreed to reactivate the WEU in the 1980s, an alternative arose and resources, tasks and attention could shift. Thus, institutional preferences gain relevance in a situation where alternatives are available. This is where we find ourselves today. We have entered a phase of considerable institutional complexity, with a multitude of institutions coexisting and converging, especially in Europe (Yupille 2006). Overlap allows for choice among ranked organizations. Thus, other than during the Cold War, Europeans can today select both NATO and EU for a crisis response operation (below the threshold of collective defense which is still reserved for NATO). Also, members of both organizations have the choice to direct their resources for military crisis management to NATO *and/or* EU. As a consequence, institutional strategies of principals vary more profoundly. Distributional conflicts arise, particularly concerning resource allocation and task assignment. In effect, the availability of alternatives creates incentives for what has been called *forum shopping*, defined as “the strategic selection of favorable venues from among a plural menu of alternatives” (Yupille 2006). It is this multiple-choice situation which might very well motivate the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs to instruct its

ambassador in NATO to pursue a different strategy on one topic than its ambassador in the EU.

The term forum shopping carries negative connotations, and what is mostly implied is indeed rivalry. Multiple-choice situations tend to pose one organization against the other. A gain for one institution tends to be perceived as a loss for another, bringing relative gains back in. Those organizations that face rising rivals and those principals that value these organizations much, tend to react protectionist. Thus, for France the re-activation of the WEU in the 1980s served to increase European choice in security and defense, whereas for the Atlanticists this created a potential rival to NATO. The temptation to hinder this rival grow was all too natural.

Forum shopping drives the intra- as well as the inter-organizational strategies of principals. Both actually interact. For the intra-organizational part, let us take French and American institutional preferences and strategies as an example. In all the major Euro-Atlantic security institutions, both pursue rivaling strategies derived from diverging institutional preferences. In the UN, Paris constantly stresses the primary responsibility of the Security Council for maintaining international peace, not least to protect its prestigious great power status. The hegemon across the Atlantic, instead, perceives its Security Council membership often more as a fetter than as an asset, slowing down or even paralyzing decisions that would be easier to take elsewhere – see the Kosovo and the Iraq Campaigns 1999 and 2003.

Contrariwise, the American institutional hierarchy is headed by NATO, which is strongly disputed by Gaullist France. Both fundamentally disagree on the prominence of the Alliance vis-à-vis the EU in the future Euro-Atlantic security network: whereas France tries to restrict NATO to collective defense, stressing the military character of the Alliance, and pushes its long-standing alternative concept of *Europe-puissance*<sup>45</sup>, the U.S. has vigorously pursued a policy of expanding NATO's mission and membership. As a consequence, institutional strategies frequently clash. Paris blocks any move of NATO into Asia and Africa.<sup>46</sup> It also resists any attempt to enhance NATO's non-military capabilities, preferring to leave reconstruction, institution-building and development to

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<sup>45</sup> This already dominated French Alliance policy in the early 1990s (Schmidt 1992: 204 and 220)

<sup>46</sup> The Pakistan earthquake relief operation in 2005 and the Darfur airlift and training support for the African Union since 2005 are widely perceived to be exceptions.

the EU (Yost 2007: 116). And France is also skeptical of Washington's proposal for NATO to assume global partnerships (and later memberships?), as this might transform the Alliance into a global community of democracies that might question the primacy of the UN (Biscop 2007: 6). The U.S, in turn, remains skeptical about every French move in ESDP towards what it perceives as "unnecessary duplication" (Heisbourg 2000: 45-50).

These are diverging intra-organizational strategies derived from rivaling institutional preferences in a situation of choice. The rivalry though is indirect: institutional adaptation takes place *in view* of others. However, it is obvious that this kind of rivalry needs to impact even more the direct interaction of organizations – and the more they interact, the more this factor figures in. Thus, since EU-NATO cooperation started in earnest in 1999, France has used its leverage in both organizations to keep the scope of cooperation limited and institutional boundaries tight (Cameron 2005: 22). In contrast, Britain is the main advocate of EU-NATO relations as close as possible. The main reason of the French protective stance seems to be a fear of U.S. encroachment. This is what NATO General Secretary Jaap de Hoop Scheffer had in mind when he recently remarked "how astounding narrow the bandwidth of cooperation between NATO and the Union has remained", ascribing this *inter alia* to his observation that "some deliberately want to keep NATO and the EU at a distance", for it means "excessive influence for the USA" (Scheffer 2007). In the OSCE, France practices, in accordance with Russia, the same strategy of keeping NATO at "arm's length" (Yost 2007: 91), thus actually concerting its institutional strategies in UN, EU and OSCE vis-à-vis NATO.

To conclude, forum shopping has become a serious source of rivalry, restricting the quantity and quality of cooperation among international organizations. It is stimulated by the structural change in the post-Cold War European security system which allows for institutional choice. However, though structure stimulates rivalry, it is still mainly actor-driven since principals are often first of all interested in advancing their own authority and less in solving problems optimally. The consequence is that those calling for more effectiveness in inter-organizational cooperation find themselves often frustrated.

### 3. Effects of rivalry

It is remarkable how little differentiation the realist-inspired literature offers on rivalries. This is especially true for the behavioral consequences (effects) of rivalries. These are the visible indicators of an otherwise invisible phenomenon (perceptions). Behavioral consequences signal the intensity of a rivalry and point to the institutional strategies rivals employ to deal with their counterpart(s).

How are rivalries played out? It is tempting, yet grossly simplifying to equate rivalry with conflict. Surely, rivalry tends to produce conflict, whereas partnership propels cooperation. However, a closer look reveals that rivalry stimulates a whole spectrum of behavior, ranging from outright confrontation to demarcation to even various forms of cooperation.

Let us first look at intensity levels of rivalry. Rivalry and partnership are poles of a continuum of increasing intensity (Thompson 2001: 559).<sup>47</sup> Determining the balance of partnership and rivalry in a relationship is therefore crucial. We might distinguish five levels of increasing rivalry: rivalry can be *absent*; it can be *latent* or *minor*, which is virulent, yet well controlled and not much visible; rivalry can be *overt*, i.e. of medium intensity, with clear signals yet restraint still exercised; and it can be *intense*, when rivalry is blatant, dominant and seriously undermining a relationship. NATO-WTO relations seem to be a case of absent rivalry, OSCE-NATO or UN-EU relations of latent rivalry, EU-NATO relations a case of overt rivalry, whereas intense rivalry I do not see yet.

There is a major caveat, though. The seemingly self-evident logic of ‘the less rivalry the more cooperation’ and *vice versa* does not hold, for three reasons. First, organizations without domain similarity do not rival, yet also not cooperate – there is not much to rival about, given the lack of overlap. However, if there is significant overlap and actor-driven concerns about relative gains in terms of authority and autonomy are absent or controlled, we should expect organizations to cooperate in-depth to tackle better the problems they face together. Second, rivalry is issue-specific. Organizations can rival in one issue-area and partner in another, though rivalry is difficult to contain. Thus, cooperation works

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<sup>47</sup> Subsequently I depart from the predominant enduring rivalries conceptualization, which presumes “extreme competition” and hostility (Vasquez 532) and explicitly does not include relations with a “mix of hostile and friendly actions” (Bennett 1997: 227).

much better ‘in the field’, where ‘internationals’ develop informal networks and distinct views differing considerably from their headquarters, than on the political level (Kupferschmidt 2006: 17-18). Third, most irritating, rivals cannot only opt for conflict, but also for cooperation as an institutional strategy to contain and control a rival. Thus, there can be what we might call *cooperation under rivalry*.

This latter point needs explanation. We cannot take the amount of conflict as a reliable indicator for the intensity of rivalry. For rivals can devise very disparate, almost contrasting strategies of how to deal with their counterparts. Rarely do organizational rivals turn to *outright confrontation*, openly confronting each other diplomatically. This might occur if functional or regional expansion is practiced all too blatantly. Crossing the “red line” in Tervuren was such a case for NATO and the U.S. The result can be utter paralysis of inter-organizational relations. Mostly restraint is exercised. Rivalry then often simply leads to non-cooperation, to mean a refusal to cooperate despite problems calling for common action. Following NATO Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer, I call this *demarcation* (Scheffer 2006). Opportunities for cooperation might simply be forfeited. Thus, both NATO and EU practice strict demarcation in their respective Eastern enlargement processes, although closer coordination would surely make sense.

*Marginalization* can, but need not be a result of demarcation. Thus, the non-coordination of the EU Barcelona Process and NATO’s Mediterranean Dialogue has little marginalizing effect. But when NATO in 1999 started the Kosovo air campaign without a UN mandate, not only the Alliance suffered, but the authority of the UN was undermined by being sidelined. In other cases, a state actor such as the U.S. brings about the marginalization of organizations. Not only did the Bush administration marginalize the UN on Iraq in 2003. The Clinton Administration employed the same marginalizing strategy towards UN, EU and Balkan Contact Group during the Dayton negotiations in November 1995, although UN and EU had organized the International Conference on Former Yugoslavia the years before and both were needed afterwards to implement the Dayton Peace Accords (Daalder 2000).

However, in dense policy spaces like Europe rival organizations are increasingly pressed to cooperate. Co-opetition then shapes inter-organizational interaction, requiring a delicate balancing act of all involved. There is problem-driven cooperation, but it

remains restrained. The full potential of synergy is not tapped, both in quantity and quality (Biermann 2007).

The most in-depth cooperation among rivals is possible if a role division is accepted by both rivals from the start. Then, an *embracement strategy* might be designed that allows even intense cooperation at least for the time being. For the stronger side, embracement offers control through cooperation; for the weaker side, embracement allows to acquire urgently needed resources from the rival. Thus, a temporary deal can be struck, exchanging cooperation for control.

NATO and its leading protagonist, the U.S., practiced embracement two times in recent history, though with limited success. The first concerned NATO's relations with the WEU between 1991 and 1999, the second its relations with the EU after the inauguration of ESDP in 1999. Actually, the amount of continuity in practicing the embracement strategy is astounding. Let me take the remainder of this section to highlight how *embracement* was played out here.

Since its foundation in 1954, the WEU was a dormant rival of NATO (Kaplan 1985, Rees 1998, Varwick 1998, Rohan 2006). Though its predecessor, the Brussels Treaty Organization, was originally conceived as a stepping stone institution for NATO, it assumed thereafter a 'reserve function' for a separate European defense in case transatlantic coupling would not work. Its explicit legal subordination to NATO was advanced to safeguard NATO's primacy.<sup>48</sup> When this "shadow alliance" (Schell 1991) was finally reactivated upon French pressure in the 1980s, NATO was for the first time challenged by a rising competitor. The WEU 'Platform of European Security Interests', issued in The Hague in 1987 (Western European Union 1987), formulated the two controversial options that would determine the WEU's future: either the organization would become the European pillar inside the Alliance or the nucleus of a separate defense arm of the European Union. For the next decade, the central controversy among Europeanists and Atlanticists was whether the WEU would lean towards EU or NATO. Both organizations moved into "latent competition" (Schmidt 1992: 215). The conflict

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<sup>48</sup> In 1954 when the Brussels Treaty Organization was upgraded to become the Western European Union (WEU), wording was inserted into Article IV of the modified Brussels Treaty asserting "the undesirability of duplicating the military staffs of NATO" and requiring the WEU to "rely on" NATO for information and advice" (Western European Union 1954, see also Schmidt 1992: 208).

publicly erupted in the lead-up to the Maastricht Treaty when Britain and the Netherlands tabled a proposal which portrayed the WEU as a permanent ‘bridge’ between EU and NATO and France and Germany proposed alternatively to create an “organic link” between EU and WEU based on the image of a ‘ferry’ that transports more and more defense functions from NATO to EU (Forster and Wallace 2000: 472-73).

At this moment, the Bush administration decided for a confrontational strategy: no challenge to NATO’s primacy. The Bartholomew memorandum of February 1991 warned explicitly against duplicating and thus weakening the Alliance and against a discrimination of non-EU NATO allies (Dembinski 2005: 69, n. 23) – the parallel to Albright’s familiar three “No’s” of 1999 is striking.<sup>49</sup> Thus, the traditional American European policy objective seemed again to triumph: striving for a maximum of leverage and control, which implied a weak, dependent Europe not organizing its own defense affairs.

However, there was another strand in American policy towards Europe, incompatible with the other, which was the perpetual call for a more favorable, i.e. equitable burden-sharing, and this implied a strong Europe as a “third force” (George F. Kennan) in world politics. As Bush’s demarcation strategy fired back and the EU went ahead with designing a new Common Foreign and Security Policy in Maastricht, declaring the WEU “an integral part of the development of the Union” (Forster and Wallace 2000: 473), a policy turn in Washington occurred in accordance with the burden-sharing rationale. This was after President Clinton became President. From the U.S. perspective, embracement implied on the one hand accepting the rise of the WEU, possibly linked to the EU, as a potential rival to NATO; on the other hand, it implied offering NATO assets and capabilities for WEU-led operations, thus exploiting WEU’s resource dependence on NATO to control as much as possible what was to come. What was termed the European Security and Defense Identity *within* NATO started in 1994 and finally led to a package of agreements signed between NATO and WEU in 1999. The asymmetric cooperation was beneficial also for the WEU, as it got badly needed resources to initiate own operations. It accepted *nolens volens* the dependence this deal entailed (Schmidt 1992, and Klein 1998).

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<sup>49</sup> Albright in her Financial Times article from 7 Dec. 1998. re-printed in Rutten 2001: 10-12.

When ESDP was born in 1999, the U.S. and NATO, after an initial period of demarcation, again embarked on embracement. The idea was simply to transfer the WEU-NATO arrangements to EU-NATO cooperation (Dembisnki 2005: 72-75). However, this time the EU did not accept the deal. For the EU was not the WEU. Not subordination and dependence, but ‘autonomy’ was its leitmotif (already in Saint Malo). Also, the record of WEU-NATO negotiations until 1999 had demonstrated the limits of embracement. The permanent struggle of autonomy versus control, epitomized in the conflicting claims of ‘assured’ versus ‘guaranteed’ access to NATO assets (Biscop 2007: 11), had strained relations and convinced not only French officials that the alternative, an autonomous European capacity, would allow more freedom to act. Thus, though Berlin plus was concluded four years later, the vector already pointed towards demarcation again.

#### **4. The evolution of rivalry in organizational networks**

Rivalries are in flux. They develop in phases of escalation and de-escalation over time, much like conflict cycles. Intensity levels vary accordingly. Accelerators and triggers such as the Tervuren proposal play a crucial role (Biermann 2006: 39 and 51).<sup>50</sup>

However, in organizational networks, dyads cannot be looked at simply in isolation. Due to the strong interdependence of its units, a change in a dyad affects others in the network.<sup>51</sup> We can draw a simple analogy from inter-state rivalries: The U.S.-Soviet rivalry fluctuated between the early years of latent rivalry, détente in the 1960s and 1970s and after 1985 and phases of brinkmanship such as the Berlin and Cuban Missile crises. And it shaped many other relationships, especially those involving one of them (such as Cuban-American relations), but even second-tier (such as Romanian-Hungarian) relations.

This interdependence also characterizes inter-organizational relations in a network. The causal mechanism is *reverberation*, a diffusion effect in densely linked systems

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<sup>50</sup> For further literature on escalation in general see Leng 2000.

<sup>51</sup> Connectivity is the defining feature of networks (Gottfredson and White, 1981: 473, and Biermann 2007).

where an impulse can be carried forward through the links of an entire system.<sup>52</sup> Thus, in the 1990s changes in NATO-WEU relations strongly fed back on NATO-EU and WEU-EU relations, to give just one obvious example of connectivity in a triad. The denser the links, the more reverberation; the more loose the links, the less reverberation. Reverberation is most pronounced in two cases: first, when major changes take place in strategic dyads, like EU-NATO, constituting the core of a network. Second, and even more, when system changes occur which profoundly upset an entire network.

System changes trigger phases of intense positioning. They are particularly rivalry-inducing. Normally, network positions adjust incrementally over time, following the differential growth of relevance of individual organizations. However, system change produces more rapid change. It accelerates power transition, not only on the state but also on the organizational level.<sup>53</sup> These are times of great uncertainty. As challengers rise and the centrality of some organizations is threatened, relative positions are called into question. Institutional preferences of major principals begin to shift and organizations are re-ranked. Because of reverberation the whole network gets in disequilibrium. I assume that actor-driven concerns of organizations about their own positions are intensifying in those periods, making cooperation even more difficult. Vice versa, once a new equilibrium is attained and relative positions have stabilized, positioning and thus rivalry abates.

However, actor-driven concerns are balanced with problem-driven concerns, i.e. concerns for solving external problems that organizations face in international affairs. I expect inter-organizational rivalry to intensify in times of strong actor-driven concerns and few problem-driven concerns. *Vice versa*, rivalries relax in times of few actor-driven concerns (i.e. relatively stable positions) and heightened problem-driven concerns. Put simply, when external pressures to cooperate are low potential rivals “can afford” the “luxury” to rival (Yost 2007: 141) – whereas when external pressures mount rivals are forced to cooperate more intensely, in effect putting their rivalry on hold. Given sufficient duration and positive experience, rivals may even overcome their rivalry in

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<sup>52</sup> This part significantly expands my previous findings on system effects in inter-organizational networks (Biermann 2007).

<sup>53</sup> This paragraph is inspired by Gilpin 1981: 10-15 and 40-49.

times of pressure, realizing the benefits of cooperation and socializing in the new cooperative setting.

I will take the remainder of this article to outline three distinct phases of escalating and de-escalating rivalry in the Euro-Atlantic security system since 1989/90 to substantiate these hypotheses.

Two major changes strongly affecting the entire network occurred in Europe since 1989/90, with a period of stabilization in-between. The first revamped the Cold War security system, the second adjusted the balance between its central organizations, NATO and EU. When the Cold War European security system collapsed, a transition period of high volatility and uncertainty set in, for the states as well as the organizations concerned. A new balance among the remaining former Western security institutions had to be struck. Strongly rivaling principals were favoring some and downgrading other organizations: the Americans and Britons mentored NATO, the Russians CSCE, the French an autonomous European capacity through WEU, and the Germans mediated in-between (Biermann 2007). Turf battles spread, as all organizations were eager to secure or even maximize their positions and thus their relevance through transformation. Since no central authority was available to prescribe positions in the new emerging system, unilateralism prevailed.<sup>54</sup> The new security “architecture” in Europe was not designed, but emerged bottom-up.

However, in the mid-1990s rivalry subsided as relative organizational positions stabilized and uncertainty abated. NATO was successfully transforming and had secured its primacy, the WEU leaned increasingly towards NATO (“Berlin signal” of 1996) and the OSCE was institutionalized (1994). The EU was not yet very much on the scene in security and defense affairs. Thus, a more cooperative vector gained ground. Strong problem-driven concerns reinforced this vector. Just as the Soviet threat had pulled Americans and Europeans together in NATO, so the external challenge of the Balkan wars forced the security institutions to close ranks (Biermann 2007). Resource pooling and resource provision became keys to tackle the problems none proved able to master alone. Problem-induced pressure thus combined with stabilizing positions to reduce the

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<sup>54</sup> Examples in Schmidt 1992; Buchsbaum 1993, 132 and 134; Peters 1997, 398; Dean 2000; Tudyka 2002; Haas 2003.

rivalry level. The formation of the Balkan Contact Group in 1994 (Schwegmann 2003) and of the post-Dayton action-set for peace building in Bosnia (Daalder 2000) signaled a growing willingness to cooperate. The creation of the Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe in 1999 (Biermann 2000) was the climax of this cooperative phase of inter-organizational relations.

Rivalry intensified again at the start of this century. As concerns the problem dimension, the situation was complex. On the one hand, the “compelling necessity” (Yost 2007: 141) to cooperate in the Balkans waned after the last conflicts in Kosovo (1999) and Macedonia (2001) were mastered and “Balkan fatigue” set in. Potentially, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 could have become the new threat that reinforces Euro-Atlantic solidarity and helps overcome rivalry. Inter-organizational cooperation indeed increased on counter-terrorism. However, U.S. policy in the second Iraq war nullified the rivalry-constraining effect of 9/11. The war boosted inter-organizational rivalry again, antagonizing Atlanticists and Europeanists. And it spilled over to the EU-NATO level, discouraging cooperation with NATO whose hegemon was perceived by many as irresponsible. Cooperating with NATO implied cooperating with the U.S. who might even instrumentalize NATO to draw the European allies into risky adventures (Biscop 2007: 3).

Actor-driven concerns meanwhile surged in this phase. The rise of the EU as a global actor in security and defense created a new, most serious rival for NATO. NATO-EU positioning had already commenced in the 1980s and intensified when the crucial shift from ESDI to ESDP occurred (Schmidt 1992, Forster and Wallace 2000). The Saint Malo declaration moved NATO-EU relations to centrality. First only a shift of preferences of two member states, it was adopted by the whole Union and rapidly spilled over from the intra-organizational to the inter-organizational level. The new reality is one of institutional choice in what NATO calls ‘non-Article-5 operations’ and the EU ‘Petersberg tasks’. Increasingly, Europeans have the option of rivalry-inducing forum shopping between NATO and EU.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> The *de facto* incorporation of the WEU in the EU, though, was a major rivalry-containing measure, as it reduced the unstable NATO-EU-WEU triad to a dyad and thus removed the major irritant in NATO-EU relations throughout the 1990s.

NATO's primacy was not fundamentally challenged, though, as long as NATO was the instrument of first choice for the U.S. and Britain's and France's ESDP policy was balanced. Yet the increasing American tendency to prefer 'coalitions of the willing' over 'war by committee' since NATO's Kosovo air campaign (Biscop 2007: 6) and the gradual shift of German institutional preferences from NATO to EU (Berenskoetter and Giegerich 2007) has tipped the balance in favor of the EU. The result is an "existential unease and a loss of direction" in NATO (Biscop 2007: 2). Its reduced relevance stimulates a heightened sense of rivalry. And as their rivalry motivates NATO as well as the EU to advance into new issue areas, others like OSCE and CoE are likewise affected.

By now, the strong sense of distrust that fueled the resurgence of inter-organizational rivalry in 2003 subsided. We have again entered a phase of abating rivalry. Yet the structural problems remain, especially the ongoing positioning of NATO and EU due to a fundamental uncertainty about their relative future positions. This affects the core of both organization's identities and transatlantic relations in general. It continues to keep the post-Cold War Euro-Atlantic security system in a state of tension and flux.

## **5. Findings**

Based on a thorough analysis of the network of Euro-Atlantic security institutions, this paper has tried to highlight rivalry among international organizations as a phenomenon that is largely neglected both by realists and institutionalists of all kinds. In a bridge-building effort, I have advanced a definition and categorization of rivalries, spent then most time on rivalry causation, moved to behavioral effects (and thus indicators) of rivalry and finished by presenting a three-phased evolution of the network of Euro-Atlantic security institutions since 1989/90 focused on rivalry and its causes.

My major intention was to add another building block to a theory of inter-organizational networking (Biermann 2007). At the end, I now condense my findings into ten propositions, which surely need much further refinement and modification<sup>56</sup>, as they

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<sup>56</sup> This pertains especially to two aspects not sufficiently covered here: divergent organizational cultures as a source of rivalry and the psychological dimension of rivalry (antagonistic images, distrust) that needs to be traced more empirically.

are tested more in-depth through studies of single and multiple inter-organizational dyads in Europe and elsewhere as well as beyond the security realm:

1. Rivalry is ubiquitous in international relations, not only among states, but also among international organizations. Its intensity varies among dyads and across time. It occurs on all levels of analysis. It is issue-specific, though difficult to contain. And it often spills over, especially from inter-state to inter-organizational rivalry.
2. Rivalry is an antagonistic role perception, posing a Self against an Other. Due to path dependence it tends to stabilize over time and accumulate “psychological baggage”, especially distorted images and distrust.
3. Rivalries have a structural and a relational (agency) dimension, and both interact. *Domain similarity* is a *sine qua non* for rivalry. Through functional and regional overlap organizations become relevant for one another. Though seemingly structural, creating domain similarity is an actor-driven choice. And once in place it does not simply predispose organizations towards rivalry, but enhances the prospects for both mutually reinforcing cooperation and rivalry.
4. *Positioning* (some call it “turf battles”), the quest for central positions in a network, is the primary causal mechanism for rivalry among organizations. It is omnipresent and takes place daily. Even though structurally motivated, it allows a range of more or less rivalrous options, from defensive positioning (protecting relative positions) to offensive power maximizing (expanding the own domain). What larger organizations often perceive as defensive positioning, smaller organizations see as “aggrandizement”, encroaching upon their domain. This is because rivalry is often lopsided, more strongly perceived by the weaker or more vulnerable side.
5. Organizations rival for relevance in terms of authority, which translates into leverage or “say” in world politics. The authority of international organizations is mainly measured in terms of *resources* obtained, *autonomy* preserved and *tasks* assigned.

6. The quest for organizational *autonomy* restrains reluctant organizations from cooperating in the first place. For cooperation is about division of labor and thus ceding autonomy. And it hinders partners cooperating (often because of problem-driven pressures) to tap the full potential of cooperation. For there is a constant struggle, especially in asymmetric relations, between maximizing autonomy and keeping *control*. Cooperation can even have the adverse effect of increasing rivalry. Major strategies to reduce dependence are diversification, substitution, duplication and issue-linkage. Each of them can be rivalry-containing, but each can also motivate the stronger side to expand its control mechanisms.
7. *Rivaling principals* are the major source of inter-organizational rivalry. I have identified two ways how they stimulate rivalry: First, principals can instrumentalize their intra-organizational veto power to disrupt relations with another organization, pursuing their own parochial interests (*hostage taking*). Second, as principals rank institutional preferences they do, in a situation of institutional choice, select the forum which best fits their purposes; this shapes their decisions on which organization to grant resources, to assign tasks and to pay attention (*forum shopping*).
8. Rivalry mostly has behavioural consequences, which indicate its intensity. However, these are not identical with conflict. And even the logic of 'the less rivalry the more cooperation' does not hold. Indeed, the spectrum of behavioural strategies encompasses everything from outright confrontation to demarcation and marginalization up to embracement. Thus, we can even observe *intense cooperation under rivalry*, though mostly only temporarily. The term *co-opetition* grasps this unique blend of cooperation and competition neatly.
9. Rivalries evolve in phases, which are driven both by actor-driven concerns about relative positions and problem-driven concerns about the magnitude of external challenges. Inter-organizational rivalry intensifies in times of strong actor-driven concerns and few problem-driven concerns. *Vice versa*, rivalries relax in times of few actor-driven concerns and heightened problem-driven concerns. Thus, when uncertainty spreads about relative positions and external problems seem manageable, actor-driven concerns easily gain prominence and rivalry spreads.

However, when positions stabilize and serious problems mount, problem-driven concerns gain prominence and inter-organizational cooperation spreads.

10. This applies not only to rivalry in dyads, but also to entire networks. *Reverberation* allows the diffusion of ideas and norms through the links among network organizations. The stronger the links, the more reverberation – the weaker the links, the less reverberation. Thus, rivalry or partnership can spread in the entire network. Reverberation is most pronounced in two cases: first, when major changes take place in strategic dyads; and second, when system change occurs which upsets an entire network.

Let me close with a provocative observation. The term rivalry has almost exclusively negative connotations in IR. In contrast, competition in sports is essential to motivate ambition, effort and achievement. The strength of liberal market economies is attributed to their system-generated competition for markets and products. And democracies are designed inherently competitive to allow electoral choice and control power. Rivalry in all these cases is not an unwarranted side effect, but a deliberately created mechanism to stimulate better output. Is rivalry always detrimental? Or do we need to rediscover the stimulating effects of rivalry in IR, also among international organizations?

Inter-organizational rivalry has at least two beneficial side effects. First, institutional overlap creates a situation of plenty. A menu of options is available. More choice allows for more adequate, tailor-made responses to complex problems – which is what politicians like. Multiple-choice situations can thus be perceived as an asset, not only as a liability. It is zero-sum thinking which often stimulates rivalry. Second, rivalry fuels the ambition of organizations to remain relevant. In order to remain relevant, they have to transform. Rivalry thus spurs transformation. Indeed, the remarkable and successful transformation of NATO and EU in recent years might have been inspired by rivalry. Thus, we might have to readjust our normative compass.

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