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MA Thesis

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**Navigating the NATO-EU interface: Operationalizing strategic culture in an  
increasingly integrated relationship**

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Tartu 2019

I have written this Master's thesis independently. All viewpoints of other authors, literary sources, and data from elsewhere used for writing this paper have been referenced.

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*Sean Joseph Fitzmaurice*

The defence will take place on ...../date/ at ...../time/

..... /address/ in auditorium number ...../number/

Opponent ..... /name/ (..... /academic degree/),

..... /position/.

**Word Count: 22,947**

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

3C – Cross-cultural competence

ARI – U.S. Army Research Institute

CAB – Cognitive, affective, behavioral paradigm

CSDP – Common Security & Defense Policy

DEOMI – U.S. Army Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute

DoD – United States Department of Defense

EEAS – European Union External Action Service

ESDP – European Security & Defense Policy

ESS – European Security Strategy

EU – European Union

EUMS – EU Military Staff

EUMC – EU Military Committee

KSAA – knowledge, skills, attitudes, and abilities

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization

SME – subject matter expert

## 1. Introduction

*“There is no sheet music. Improvisation is required around a central theme...Jazz musicians live by their wits and the quality of their ear. Military commanders now also live by their wits and by their intuition.”*

*- Air Marshal Sir Brian Burridge (Burridge 2004)*

In his lecture at St. George’s House, the British field force commander for the Iraqi invasion, Air Marshal Sir Brian Burridge, emphasized the changing role of the military leader in a post-modern world. He stressed the need for adaptability as a prerequisite for applying national and international strategy in diverse situations. His message is even more applicable fifteen years later as rapid globalization and evolving crises around the globe have demanded interpretation and adjustment from military and civilian policy influencers. Currently, one of the most significant developments in global crisis management is the growing cooperative relationship between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU).

NATO and the EU represent a unique and essential partnership which provides a comprehensive approach to crisis management and operations around the world. Together, the two security institutions represent the effective comprehensive application of military and civilian means to crisis management that is most pertinent to European security. The partnership epitomizes collaboration between two multinational organizations with differing strengths, weaknesses, and cultures, but which share 22 member states between them. Both organizations are incredibly reliant on leadership excellence. The intriguing aspect about leadership in NATO and the EU is that, in the realm of the military, it is often performed by the same people.

First a product of the Warsaw Summit in 2016, and reaffirmed in Brussels in 2018, NATO and the EU agreed to enhance cooperation in seven concrete areas, which has resulted in 75 projects/actions already undertaken (EEAS 2019). This cooperation draws more officers to the NATO-EU interface in a broader range of career paths than ever before. How these individual leaders manage the transition between the two organizations is vital to both the functionality of the NATO-EU partnership today, and the development of future leaders who will encounter similar challenges.

The differences between NATO and the EU have been researched through a multitude of frameworks. The concept of strategic culture is the most applicable as it is used to describe how strategic decisions are made, and the behaviors that can be expected within an organization. These behavioral trends present significant leadership challenges to those individuals tasked with operating within two different organizations, often simultaneously. Academic literature tends to focus on defining a security institution's strategic culture. Predominantly, the research questions concern *how* strategic culture is developed or *from where* a particular strategic culture is derived (Zyla 2011). This thesis instead looks at the role strategic culture plays in shaping the decisions and attitudes of those social actors within it.

An elaborate or eloquent description of strategic culture serves little practical purpose to military leaders if it does not describe how members within that culture actually behave and arrive at decisions. Likewise, when social agents are tasked with shifting back and forth between two different strategic cultures, then they must adjust their own norms and patterns of behavior in accordance with the prevailing strategic culture of their current role. In this sense, this thesis takes a constructivist approach to strategic culture by better understanding the patterns of behavior of social actors.

Little previous attention has been given to individuals navigating between two strategic cultures. Studies concerning the Europeanization, for example, of national strategic cultures fail to account for the behavioral requirements placed on the individual level. Cultures are more typically compared when they pose an adversarial relationship. Therefore, the possibility that some social actor would be required to adapt to one or another strategic culture is overlooked. NATO and the EU represent a unique interface of strategic cultures. It is not an intersection of two incompatible adversaries, as typically posed by comparative studies, but rather an interface which implies fluid transfer of ideas, values, and personnel between each organization. This thesis examines the leadership demands put on modern military officers who are asked to navigate that interface more regularly as NATO-EU cooperation increases. A better understanding of

this culture gap between the two organizations will help to understand the challenge confronting these leaders.

Adapting to cultural difference in the military is not a new concept. To investigate adjustment to a new culture, the most applicable framework to this thesis is that of cross-cultural competence (3C). 3C research in the military stems primarily from US servicemembers taking on roles they were not intended for and encountering cross-cultural challenges. The focus of the United States to better prepare officers trained in infantry or artillery for encountering, cooperating, and negotiating with Afghan and Iraqi locals has resulted in substantial concrete training directives by way of the 3C model. The 3C model entails the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and abilities (KSAAs) which better prepare an individual for cross-cultural interaction. NATO has adopted 3C instruction into its training curricula for senior leaders and encourages its expansion to topics of multinational cooperation (Palloni 2018).

This thesis, then, puts the ideas of strategic culture and 3C together. No other study has ever examined the strategic cultures of NATO and the EU through the very practical lens of 3C. The impact of such a study is implied by the question, “If we ask military leaders to navigate the interface between the strategic cultures of NATO and the EU, are we giving them the tools to succeed via 3C training?” This study, therefore, bridges the divide between a practical and theoretical thesis. It examines the impact of theoretical concepts on practical applications, which allows for a truly multi-disciplinary approach.

The research design is intended to better understand the intricacies of the NATO-EU interface. It is modeled after the researcher’s own experiences with operability inspections of nuclear reactors on submarines. In such inspections, the functionality and reliability of the reactor could easily be ascertained through the multitude of data and procedures available on each platform. Daily and hourly statistics are recorded throughout the life of the reactor and serve to identify any trend in reactor performance. However, an inspection of reactor functionality goes beyond the data and takes the form of ethnography. Spending time to understand those people directly responsible for the reactor’s safe operation and glean wisdom from their best practices is the true goal of

the inspection. Similarly, this thesis steps away from traditional strategic culture research because it does not focus on broad, overarching strategic documents or results and analysis from various NATO and EU missions. This research design is focused on spending time with those people directly responsible for navigating the NATO-EU interface. Doing so serves to better understand the intricacies of the responsibility and to glean wisdom from their best practices.

The thesis is structured to provide the reader with an elementary understanding of both strategic culture and 3C. It is important to understand how strategic culture is derived from more general culture studies because that is what makes the patterns of behavior of social actors so pivotal to its existence. The factors of the 3C model are investigated for how they are used by military leaders while they navigate the NATO-EU interface. Data for seven cases are obtained through semi-structured interviews with a variety of military officers who each encountered the NATO-EU interface from a different perspective. This includes senior strategic decision-makers and operational unit commanders leading ships on NATO and EU missions. Each case is examined for its own merits, and finally trends across cases are identified in order to generalize the findings of this study. Significant insight into case analysis is provided by the researcher's own interpretive analysis of the challenges facing military leaders in the NATO-EU interface and determining the most applicable KSAs for coping with those challenges. What follows is an initial investigation of 3C in the NATO-EU interface and identifies some significant trends which should prove useful to tailoring 3C training for future military leaders.



## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Strategic culture

Strategic culture is a critical concept for understanding strategic issues between nations. However, it was not until the final third of the twentieth century that strategic culture truly emerged as an academic concept. Jack Snyder's 1977 report for RAND Corporation, "The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Operations" is widely regarded as the 'beginning' of strategic culture studies. In this report, Snyder defines strategic culture as "the sum total of ideas, conditioned emotional responses, and patterns of habitual behavior that members of a national strategic community have acquired through instruction or imitation and share with each other" (Snyder 1977, p. 9). Strategic culture appeared to solve the issue of a security actor operating outside of its best interests based on available information and resources, as rational choice theory would dictate. Instead, Snyder identified a reason for strategic decisions which derived from certain normative orientations. This spurred debate founded on the belief that culture could better explain an approach to national security than the traditional neorealist viewpoint had been able to. However, because much of this thesis is related to both culture and the behaviors it creates, it is beneficial to highlight key areas where, and how, strategic culture theory developed. The importance of this review is to describe the various levels of strategic culture which have been handled in previous studies.

Historically, strategic culture was far from a new concept when Jack Snyder and others began their study in the 1970s and 1980s. Security studies have always reflected on characterization and understanding of one's opponent. Strategic culture's core tenants can be identified within such seminal works as Carl von Clausewitz's *On War* and Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*. Both Clausewitz and Sun Tzu similarly stress the necessity for understanding the nature of conflict and the nature of the adversary. Looking further into history directs a scholar to Thucydides and his *History of the Peloponnesian War*. Thucydides explains the behavior of Athens and Sparta in the context of their distinct cultural differences. Historians and strategists have always been interested in explaining decision-making tendencies of states in the military realm, and Jack Snyder simply

coined a term in the 1970s to encapsulate that study. Strategic culture, as an academic concept, owes its coherence to more general studies of culture which preceded it, and continued to develop in parallel. Three strands of academic debate weave together to form the foundation of strategic culture: general culture, political culture, and particular ways of war.

### *2.1.1 The cultural bases of strategic culture*

First, general culture studies lend to strategic culture an overall understanding of what factors have long-term influence on a nation's psyche. Social scientists and anthropologists alike have grappled with developing a succinct and verifiable definition of culture. Franz Boas, the father of cultural anthropology, put forth the idea that each society possesses a unique culture that is influenced by historical interactions with the natural world and other societies (Ballinger 2006, p. 343). The sheer number and complexity of these influential factors have led to vague definitions often used in social science literature. It becomes problematic to determine which societal factors to include or exclude from a functional definition of culture (Hudson 1997, p. 2). Most of these factors can appear in one instance as firm rules which regulate a society's culture, while in a separate scenario they serve as exceptions to other rules, making culture complicated to conceptualize in general. Yet, despite its varied conceptualization, the key question culture studies seek to explain is how culture influences individual personality and behavior (Ballinger 2006, p. 342).

This thesis borrows from culture studies the aspect of internal functionality. Culture studies sought to generalize social groups by their behavioral tendencies and did so by examining how a culture manifests internally. It is most interesting to note that strategic culture theory emerged from a field, including the historical works of Clausewitz and Sun Tzu, which sought to explain "the other". Much of the focus in strategic culture studies logically follows the trend of deciphering an enemy's tactics and behavior to gain a predictive advantage. The study of strategic culture, therefore, has historically been for tactical reasons. This thesis, however, instead looks at cooperating strategic cultures, between partners, and attempts to analyze their compatibility.

The second field of culture studies which provided an academic foundation for strategic culture theory is the idea of political culture. Political scientists joined sociologists in the 1960s to link culture with observable and impactful behavior. What political scientists found was a way to explain the political tendencies of a society based on the underlying cultural traits which it held. Almond and Verba were among the first to define political culture as “a subset of beliefs and values of a society that relate to the political system” (Lantis 2005). In this sense, they suggested that collective understanding of these beliefs and values could be used to explain distinct behaviors and decisions in various political fields. One field of Almond and Verba’s political culture is the use of military force, the focused study of which naturally gave rise to the strategic culture discipline (Almond & Verba 1965, pp. 11-14).

Comparatists embraced political culture as an interesting link or independent variable influencing the outcome, or the choice made. Adda Bozeman saw war and related phenomena as “aspects of locally prevalent values, images, traditions, and mental constructs” (Bozeman 1976). Culture served, in political studies, as a means to represent the norms, values, and modes of thinking that survive change and remain meaningful to successive generations. Early political culture theorists attempted to define a nation’s political character in terms of enduring factors: the nation’s language, religion, socialization, and its interpretation of common memories (Elkins and Simeon 1979). Each of these factors were found to influence the role perception and decision-making of a particular political institution.

Political culture theory was criticized in the 1980s for being epiphenomenal and subjective. In striving to incorporate increasingly complex definitions of culture, it seemed that political culture could explain every behavior within an isolated system. This in turn led to the abandonment of cultural interpretive arguments in what Lantis identifies as “the behavioral revolution in the social sciences” (Lantis 2005). Gray, retrospectively in 1984, points out the logic of strategic culture stemming from the political culture discipline (Gray 1984). He claimed a social culture likely encourages a certain *style* of behavior in the realm of national security. This focused study of how a

nation addresses the concept of armed conflict is characterized as a particular way of war.

Continuing the tradition of Thucydides, Clausewitz, and Sun Tzu in characterizing warfare, Liddell Hart published *The British Way in Warfare* in 1932. He addressed what he saw as a distinctly British approach to warfare which involved economic pressure through naval operations and financing auxiliaries to bear the cost of ground fighting (Hart 1932). As a telling example, Hart used the protracted campaign of World War I to show the consequences of not acting in accordance with one's own national way of war. By focusing on trench warfare in a ground campaign, the British abandoned what Hart alluded to as its natural style. Later in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, ideas of American, Chinese, and Soviet ways of war also emerged. Weigley, for example, identified the strategies of attrition and annihilation as critical aspects of America's strategic tendencies (Uz Zaman 2009, p. 71). Recently, the idea of a particular way of war has expanded beyond national boundaries to include a "European way of war" (Vennesson et al 2008). These studies rely on trends and patterns in strategic logic to characterize a nation or security institution.

Through these various concepts, strategic culture serves as a means to characterize "the way of doing business" within a security institution. It relies on the social influence of culture, the institutionalized lens of decision-making similar to organizational or political culture, and results in a particular style unique to that security institution. However, the gap between a particular way of war and the study of strategic culture lies between the *how* and *why* of strategic tendencies. Studies of national ways of war are descriptive in nature by seeking *how* a nation utilizes its armed forces. This approach defines a lagging variable across historical events with the intention that such a description may provide utility to understanding future interactions. Such analysis does not provide sufficient predictive capacity for a study of internal aspects of a particular culture. Strategic culture, on the other hand, seeks to explain *why* a nation utilizes its armed forces in the manner it does through analysis rather than description.

The first indication of a move from descriptive particular ways of war to the more analytical strategic culture is Colin S. Gray's 1971 "What Rand Hath Wrought" (Lantis 2005). In assessing American and Soviet nuclear strategies, Gray opposed the rational-actor theories that were typically used to explain nuclear deterrence and arms control. Instead, he proposed that the very ideas of deterrence and escalation may be interpreted differently based on the collective understanding held by the decision-makers in each society. Gray claimed that pure rationality fell short when such a variance in the conceptualization of a particular scenario existed between societies. The study of *why* these ideas are interpreted within a society was imperative to future study. Jack Snyder (1977) defined strategic culture for the first time as that link. Development of the strategic culture concept has taken various paths over the past four decades. The most widely accepted categorization of the academic debate is to group certain time periods into three generations, as Alastair Iain Johnston (1995) has done.

### *2.1.2 Three generations of strategic culture*

The first generation of strategic culture studies, born directly from studies of national character and national ways of war, focused on the difference between US and Soviet nuclear war doctrines. Snyder (1977) coined the term "strategic culture", which he found was a semi-permanent characteristic that provided an explanation for strategic divergence between the US and USSR on nuclear doctrine. Elites, he argued, served to articulate public opinion into a distinctive mode of strategic thinking that was moderated by socialization (Lantis 2005). Ken Booth (1979) followed with an in-depth look at how cultural relativism explains how an actor is influenced by his or her own cultural conditioning. This conditioning provides the ideational foundations of strategies and relations between the two superpowers, and more coherently accounts for their differences in approach (Lantis 2005). Similarly, this thesis relies on cultural conditioning to better understand how strategic culture influences a social actor's decisions.

In analyzing the Soviet approach to nuclear doctrine, David Jones (1990) concluded that strategic culture pervasively influenced every level of decision-making from Soviet

grand strategy down to tactics. He further categorized strategic culture into macro-environmental factors (geography, ethnocultural characteristics, history), societal factors (social, economic, and political structures), and micro-level factors (military institutions and civil-military relations) (Johnston 1995, p. 37). Each first-generation scholar found that strategic culture could be presented as the primary explanation for differences in nuclear strategy between the US and USSR.

Criticism of the first generation's strategic culture focuses on its definitional, deterministic, and instrumental deficiencies. First, and foremost, is the broad nature of the first-generation definition of strategic culture. From Snyder's (1977) definition to Jones' (1990) categories, nearly every societal factor is taken into account. This creates an amorphous concept consisting of influential factors which could likely stand as their own, and often competing, independent variables. Future generations of strategic culture theorists claimed that the nature of this definition was tautological, meaning that this version of strategic culture was incredibly difficult to test (Johnston 1995, p. 37). These opponents argued that if everything is included in the definition, then what can strategic culture be tested against to prove its validity?

Similarly, Johnston (1995) and Lantis (2005) point out that the sheer number and diversity of factors included in the definition would not remain consistent over time, and likely produce alternative strategic cultures when some variables are included or eliminated. The ambiguous hierarchy of variables within the definition allows a scholar to characterize a strategic culture in an ambiguous way. This thesis utilizes a conceptualization of strategic culture from the third generation, which better clarifies its constituent components.

The second generation, which emerged in the mid-1980's, focused on the instrumentality of strategic culture and differentiated between declaratory and operational strategies. This particular strand of study has little applicability to this thesis because of the constructivist approach taken in line with the first and third generations. The second generation has been largely rejected for its lack of consistency with contemporary leadership studies (Johnston 1995, Klein 1988).

Emerging in the 1990s, the third generation of strategic culture more closely resembles the first generation's framework. The third generation shares the belief with the first that ideational or cultural variables influence behavior and decision-making. However, the third generation offers more rigorous treatment of the independent variables. Johnston (1995) explains the difference as the third generation's exclusion of behavior within its definition of culture. These studies avoid the tautological trap which the first generation suffered from in defining strategic culture by using behavior as a dependent variable.

In line with the focus of this thesis, Theo Farrell (2002) views the third generation as the merger of culturalism and constructivism. It is a way to study the impact of norms and ideas on international security. Farrell found that culture shapes preference formation within military organizations by reinforcing identity norms, which in turn shapes members' behavioral output. The constructivist approach of the third generation explains identity formation influenced by organizational processes, history, tradition, and culture (Lantis 2005).

Johnston (1995) also warns that the third generation must remain disciplined in using behavior as the dependent variable, and not doctrine or policy. This is a critical step to avoid the criticism of the second generation, which claimed that strategic culture only influences declaratory strategy and not operational decision-making. The constructivist approach dictates that third-generation scholars must rely on the verifiable output of behaviors, and not simply words written or spoken by elites. An additional consequence of this focus is that third generation studies tend to focus on only the output of a given strategic culture. This allows for comparative studies of the inputs and outputs but does little to examine the internal functionality of a strategic culture, as illustrated in Figure 1.

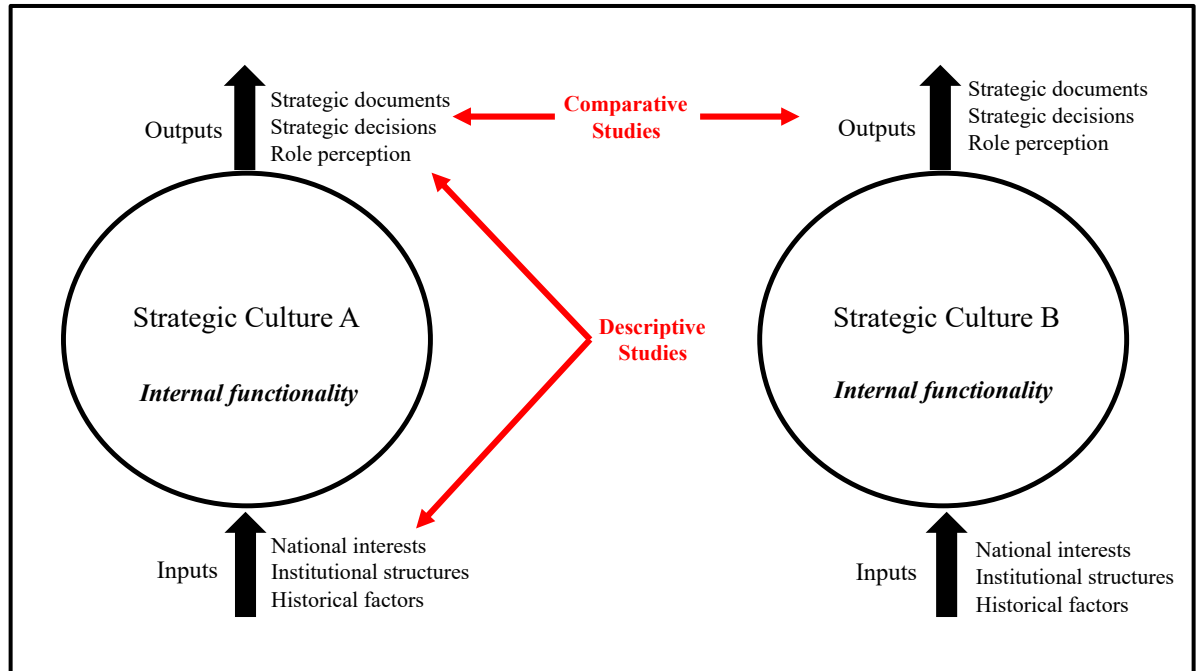


Figure 1. Analytic display of research objects (identified by red arrows) of third generation strategic culture studies. (Researcher's own)

An overwhelming majority of strategic culture literature examines the external inputs, outputs, or consequences of strategic culture on a security community. Very few look at the internal workings, or the individuals specifically acting within the strategic culture. With his advancement of cultural adaptation theory, Farrell (2005) represents the closest perspective of strategic culture to the one taken by this thesis. Farrell explains how security actors – individuals – modify their military practices in order to avoid violating societal norms. He is regarded as somewhat unique in this approach because he examines the internal aspects of strategic culture and how actors adjust to them. He advocates for closer relations between the constructivist and rationalist approaches to security studies. Likewise, this thesis separates from a strong majority of strategic culture literature by looking at the internal functionality of a strategic culture.

### 2.1.3 Separating strategic, organizational, and political cultures

The internal functionality of a culture, especially institutional cultures found in NATO and the EU, is often addressed by organizational culture. Political culture, as discussed, may also provide insight into how decisions are shaped based on prevailing cultural pressures. Strategic culture, however, is unique in that it concerns the output of



organizational decision-making. Organizational culture, or the collective understanding of symbols and limitations, describes the formation of such a strategic output. Johnston (1995) noted that strategic culture definitions do not vary much from those of political or organizational culture. Where organizational culture ends and strategic culture begins is a question of how strategic culture is accumulated and passed on.

This thesis analyzes the gate-keepers or bearers of strategic culture and such an ‘internal’ examination tends to blur the line between organizational and strategic cultures. Yitzhak Klein characterized the bearers of strategic culture as those “who are charged with defining the military objective of war and devising the means of achieving it...The effect of strategic culture is likely to be felt most prominently at the level of operational thinking” (Klein 1991). He goes on to characterize the military’s impact on political culture, as well. Legro (1995) and Klein (1997) take a similar approach with organizational culture. Based on their analysis, organizational culture across militaries tend to be quite similar – hierarchical, rigid, and distinct. Strategic culture, however, represents the direction and purpose which serve as the guiding objective of the development of an organizational culture.

## *2.2 Strategic culture of the EU*

This thesis approaches the EU’s strategic culture viewed through the constructivist approach of third-generation of strategic culture studies. The strategic culture of the EU presents an interesting and unique debate within strategic culture scholarship. First and foremost, is disagreement over whether or not the EU has a unique strategic culture. Previous scholarship took for granted that international actors such as the US, USSR, UK, Germany, and Japan possessed the requisite factors to develop a strategic culture, and due to this assumption, failed to derive appropriate metrics for determining whether an actor’s strategic culture exists in the first place. Biava et al (2011) highlighted the sheer lack of operationalization applied to strategic culture through the literature. They note that there are no agreed upon metrics for judging when a strategic culture has been obtained, or a typology to guide literature into classifying a possible strategic culture.

What is interesting to note is the lack of literature focused on the existence of a NATO strategic culture. NATO's strategic culture is largely taken for granted as an inherent quality of the long-standing military alliance. Zyla (2011), for example, acknowledges the dominant strategic culture of NATO from the time of the Cold War. He uses NATO's interpretation of challenges and threats, behavioral norms, and role of third parties to contrast the EU's approach to the same issues in order to define the EU strategic culture as it relates to NATO's. Becker (2012), perhaps comes closest to an analytical assessment of NATO's strategic culture by performing an analytical comparison of NATO Strategic Concepts and U.S. National Security Documents. His conclusion that there is not significant convergence between the two, and despite the overwhelming burden shared by the United States, he still points to an independent NATO strategic culture. It is in line with this finding that this thesis assumes NATO's and the EU's strategic cultures are, in fact, different.

A broad look at the literature on the EU's strategic culture will quickly inform the reader that there is more debate than there is agreement about a potential strategic culture in the EU. As much has been written on the non-existence of an EU strategic culture as has been written trying to define its characteristics. It seems, as well, that each international crisis in which the EU could play a role also changes the trajectory of some scholars' opinions on the matter (for example, Libya 2011). Thus, two major groupings of literature exist. The first consists of those which support the idea that the EU, as an international actor, has or is developing an autonomous strategic culture. This includes research that contends that convergence of national strategic cultures through EU institutions constitutes a unique EU strategic culture. The second consists of those who do not believe the EU can be or become, due to various limitations, an autonomous security or defense actor, and therefore has no distinct strategic culture.

Cornish and Edwards (2001) composed the first in-depth assessment of what they concluded was a developing EU strategic culture. In doing so, they defined strategic culture as "the institutional confidence and processes to manage and deploy military force...with general recognition of the EU's legitimacy as an international actor with military capabilities" (Cornish & Edwards 2001, p. 587). The historical context of this

definition is worth noting, as 2001 saw the EU institutionalizing its security and defense structures more rapidly than ever before. This was, however, before the structuring following the Lisbon Treaty in 2009 which saw the creation of institutional entities like the European External Action Service (EEAS).

Within the same timeframe, Howorth (2002) similarly identified the potential convergence of institutions, policies, and capabilities based on ideational and cognitive homogeneity within European states. Howorth categorized six divergences within EU actors: allied/neutral, Atlanticist/Europeanist, professional power projection/conscript-based territorial defense, nuclear/non-nuclear powers, large/small states, and weapons systems providers/consumers. Krotz (2009) noted how EU enlargement in 2004 only exacerbated these differences but left open the fact that institutional convergence can still occur over time. The European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP), Howorth (2002) acknowledged, was a tool which had helped to narrow the gaps in these divergences. The European Security Strategy (ESS), the EU Global Strategy which replaced the ESS in 2016, and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) have served as institutional tools of convergence to minimize these differences as Member States tend towards Europeanization, making a distinct EU strategic culture more probable.

Myer (2005) presented a constructivist support for an EU strategic culture based on the convergence of norms in a similar context to Howorth's divergences. Myer argued that based on the voting structure within CSDP, an EU strategic culture must draw on the collective Member States' norms regarding the use of force. He hypothesized three results: a self-defense only strategic culture, collectively upgraded norms towards expansion of CSDP to a more activist strategic culture, or a hybrid of the two which would then become institutionalized and internalized. His prediction of a progressive de-prioritization of strictly territorial defense and lingering differences, amongst Member States, on the use of force abroad to pre-empt a security threat is consistent with later works on the same topics (Zyla 2011, Johansen 2017). By 2017, it is clear that the utilization of EU military assets remains a contentious subject, but that a de-

prioritization of strictly territorial defense has certainly occurred. This is reflected in the broad experiences represented within the cases of this thesis.

Where Norheim-Martinsen (2011) varied from previous works, although similarly constructivist as the rest of the third generation, is that he argued that the EU found its strategic culture through preferred means of action. Comprehensive security action, he found, was a culturally conditioned end sought by the EU. This means that the goal of a strategic decision is not necessarily the use of force, but rather the creation of a comprehensive approach. Norheim-Martinsen pointed to the ESS as an expression of the EU's strategic narrative to drive towards cohesion. The ESS, however, has been both a blessing and a curse to those seeking to define the EU's strategic culture.

As Zyla (2011) noted, the ESS is an activist interpretation of security with normative goals. The EU is typically averse to using military force to achieve political objectives because such action would run counter to the civilian normative power the EU seeks to be. That results in strategic ambiguity which some scholars capitalize on to point to a lack of EU strategic culture. According to Rynning (2003), disagreements within the EU over threat analysis and the use of military force typically results in a failure to take action, as in Libya in 2011. Such a lack of sufficiently coherent or consistent approach to the use of force, for Rynning, and for Tardy (2007), does not allow for a productive discussion of an EU strategic culture. The rest of this school points to convergence of interests as a pre-requisite to the development of an EU strategic culture.

A second argument used against an EU strategic culture is multi-level governance. Haine (2011) noted that the EU cannot be regarded as having a single coherent strategic culture as an autonomous actor because of the variety of influences from the multi-level system. She argues that CSDP is a political tool focused on the EU's global image and legitimacy, and that political and security beliefs should not be confused with strategic culture. Similarly, Freedman (2004) took a contrarian approach to what Norheim-Martinsen (2011) later saw as a way to identify an EU strategic culture. Freedman argued that military doctrine from CSDP would be dysfunctional because it comes from a sense of political unity and would therefore not be effective guidance in an active

conflict. Additionally, Bailes (1999) noted that a lack of “distinct European models or set of European values in organization of defence” meant the failure to develop an EU strategic culture. It has been difficult to argue in recent literature, that her argument is invalid, despite the massive reorganization of security and defense structures following the Lisbon Treaty in 2009.

Such academic debate paints a complex picture concerning the EU’s strategic culture and only highlights the intricate nature of a civilian enterprise operating in the realm of international security and defense. Complexities abound concerning the EU’s relation to the use of military force. As such, navigating the EU’s security environment would be equally complex for an individual coping with the various influences on EU strategic culture, however it is defined. Thus, this thesis focuses not on resolving the debate over the existence or nature of the EU’s strategic culture, but aligns with the constructivists of the third generation, like Farrell (2005), and examines the impact of such complexities on the internal functionality of a strategic culture. Emphasis is placed on expanding this thread of research (internal functionality) because of the increased importance of individual military leaders in the post-modern military.

As the general trend in military activity continues towards interventionism, greater responsibility is placed throughout the military chain of command for developing critical thinking and agile leaders. Interventionism has forced the military towards adapting and coordinating with civil affairs leading to the emergence of the “soldier-diplomat” (Burke 2010). Similar terms like “strategic corporal” point to the competence required by all military personnel to understand their strategic position in world affairs and cooperate effectively in a civilian-oriented environment (Krulak 1999). Nowhere is this truer than in NATO-EU cooperation. Military leaders throughout the various levels of strategic, tactical, and operational decision-making must adapt effectively to this increased responsibility. The success of the partnership depends on it.

Therefore, this thesis steps away from traditional strategic culture literature in order to examine the internal functionality of such a culture. Strategic culture literature tends to touch on the importance of internal aspects, such as the “socialization of elites”, but

does not develop this concept to much extent. This thesis adds an important development to strategic culture literature by not only characterizing the internal challenges associated with a particular strategic culture but also how military leaders adapt to a cultural shift. It is most useful to approach such a study from a framework already developed by the military for cultural adaptation: cross-cultural competence.

### ***2.3 Cross-cultural competence (3C)***

The field of intercultural competence, and the necessarily skills associated with these interactions, is broad and diverse. The development of intercultural competence studies traces its roots to the emergence of organizational culture theories of the 1950s and 1960s. There is a massive amount of literature on cultural competency across diverse fields of psychology, anthropology, communication, and linguistics, and each of their subfields, that it requires the researcher to accurately identify where a study falls within the greater scholarship on such a topic. The focus of this thesis concerns the development of cultural competence in a military context. Specifically, how an individual should operate in the volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous environment of the EU's security institutions. By 2007, the US Department of Defense (DoD) realized that it must expand its efforts to train personnel to be effective in culturally different scenarios (Abbe et al. 2007). Issues in Afghanistan and Iraq at the time prompted a surge in resources and focus on culture in the military. Much of these resources were manifest in research grants for developing training models for use with military personnel. The gap in military-specific literature in this field was large, as previous studies focused on expatriates, Peace Corps volunteers, and study abroad students. Similarities between requirements of these jobs and military deployment in a combat zone were minimal (Gallus et al. 2014, p. v).

Prior to 2007, much of the US military's effort on cultural competence focused on learning a particular language within a particular region. As Abbe et al (2007) highlighted in a report for the US Army Research Institute (ARI), full-spectrum military operations demanded a broad cultural capability that was more than expertise of a specific region. Cross-cultural competence (3C) served as the general skill set that was

most appealing to the US military in a military context. It offered an ability to identify measurable variables and characteristics which could therefore be trained to improve the cultural adaptability of military forces (Gabrenya et al 2012). Abbe et al (2007) established the first definition of 3C used within US Army research: “an individual capability that contributes to intercultural effectiveness regardless of the particular intersection of cultures”. In doing so, they linked the US military’s approach to 3C with particular knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes (KSAAs) germane to effective cross-cultural performance (Gallus et al. 2014).

Abbe et al (2007), and therefore the greater US DoD, thus confined military 3C within the cognitive, affective, and behavioral (CAB) paradigm, one of the two major paradigms of intercultural competence scholarship. Hammer (2015) summarized the two paradigms as a difference in epistemology and therefore level of precision of the results. The construct used by Abbe and others, the CAB paradigm, examines personal factors through the lens of cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions in order to determine an individual’s intercultural competence. This paradigm is the most widespread and dominant trend in 3C research and has resulted in a continuously growing list of skills and components. Most simply, studies within this paradigm produce results such as, for example, ‘if one is to have strong 3C, then he or she must have a high tolerance of ambiguity’. These are very clear and ordinal independent or antecedent variables which directly relate to an overall quality of 3C.

Of course, a list of characteristics which can be tested for, and trained to, is in harmony with the cognitive/instructional education paradigm of classic military training. If a study, for example, identifies high tolerance for ambiguity as a 3C factor, then the Army can attempt to train officers to improve their tolerance for ambiguity. However, as Hammer (2015) acknowledged, the CAB paradigm has its shortcomings. Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) identified within the literature a collection of 264 components of intercultural competence, 64 cognitive/personality traits, 77 affective/attitudinal dimensions, and 124 behavioral/skill factors cited. The inconsistency and overlap among many of the factors clearly demonstrate how much a given study’s cultural context varies the results within the CAB paradigm. There is little agreement from CAB

study to CAB study of what specific independent variables influence 3C. 3C within Peace Corps volunteers, it seems, requires different factors than 3C in Army soldiers negotiating in Afghanistan or expatriates in corporate industry (Spitzberg and Changnon 2009).

The pioneering Abbe et al. (2007) report was part of a larger DoD study titled “Cultural Understanding and Language Proficiency” which analyzed and combined existing measures of cross-cultural performance from a variety of different disciplines. In this regard, the report became the launching point for future DoD 3C literature. The report determined that certain general competencies outweighed specific regional or language skills in determining intercultural effectiveness, and even identified possible antecedent variables to the construct including dispositional, biographical, and identity constructs (Gallus 2014, p. 3). From this basis, two schools of 3C research have emerged. The first is the assessment school, represented by Ross et al (2010), Gabrenya et al (2012), and others which seek to further refine the conceptualization and operationalization of 3C and its assessment methods. The second is the education and training school, represented by Reid et al (2012), McCloskey et al (2010), and others which seek to illustrate optimal training modes to assist in the development of 3C KSAs.

In the assessment school, Ross et al (2010) developed a 3C inventory in order to operationalize the definition of 3C in future studies and assessments. A simplified version of these types of 3C studies is illustrated in Figure 2. They took a rational-empirical approach to the factors which influence 3C by conducting both literature review and in-depth interviews with subject matter experts. The goal of the project was to “provide a military-relevant instrument that could be used to predict the readiness of our force for cross-cultural missions” (Ross et al. 2010, p. 1). This approach, combining deductive and inductive reasoning to define a model for 3C, is most similar to the research design undertaken within this thesis. Ross et al. (2010) began with an extensive literature review in order to consolidate towards a singular conceptualization of 3C. Additionally, the literature review allowed the researchers to catalogue previous operationalizations used in other, non-military, instruments. Armed with a broad array of possible variables for operationalization, the team then conducted interviews with



nine Army soldiers who recently returned from deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. The result was an inventory of operationalized 3C constructs with increased validity because of their practical derivation. This study allowed the DoD to further focus further on the specific operationalizations which it believed could be trained, and therefore improved.

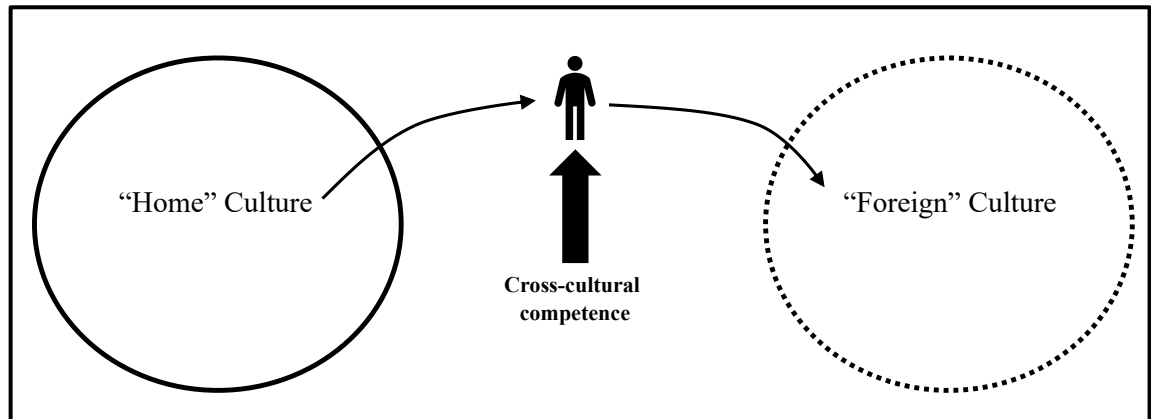


Figure 2. Analytic display of a basic 3C study. Defining the component factors of 3C is the research aim. (Researcher's own)

Significant advances have been made over the past decade in improving the classification of certain factors concerning 3C. One of the main difficulties in compiling a 3C inventory is the ambiguity involved in distinguishing a potential variable as either antecedent or part of the 3C construct itself. Task-analysis-based methods have proven to be reliable in minimizing this ambiguity. A task analysis focuses on specific behavioral examples through interviews with subject matter experts (SMEs) to better understand the characteristics essential to job performance (Trejo et al 2015). This approach enables researchers to better separate the personal characteristics, antecedents, from the performance-based aspects of 3C therefore improving the validity of such an operationalization. This creates a more credible and valid list of KSAs which comprise 3C independent of personality traits.

The education and training school emerged in tandem with the assessment school and focused more on the developmental sequence of 3C. Reid et al. (2012) sought to codify a developmental process in order to provide DoD personnel the ability to “successfully work” in cross-cultural situations. This meant the literature required more attention concerning *how* to teach and improve 3C, rather than to simply identify its component

factors and KSAs as Ross et al. (2010) had done. Reid and colleagues propose specific training methods for the KSAs identified by the 3C inventory. However, more research is still needed to determine which of these KSAs are more malleable so that instructors can maximize their efforts. Methods to better equip future leaders with the necessary 3C KSAs have been assessed by Abbe & Gallus (2011) and Solomon et al (2009), who focused on computer simulations to model cross-cultural interactions and scenarios. This type of training assessment represents the most practical follow-on study to this thesis, which falls within the assessment school.

### 3. Research Question

In simplest form, this thesis seeks to understand what it is like for a military leader to operate within both NATO and the EU. The research question guiding this study is, **“What skills are necessary to adapt between differing strategic cultures?”** The thesis therefore attempts to identify the leadership challenge created by an EU strategic culture through the lens of intercultural interactions. Rather than attempting to define EU strategic culture in relation to other security actors, which is bountiful in other literature, this thesis attempts to understand *how* the EU’s strategic culture is exhibited on a practical and personal level. With this purpose, the research intends to identify the most significant KSAAAs which enable adaptation to a culturally different organization while using 3C as a foundation.

The goal is to operationalize 3C for individuals operating between distinct strategic cultures. Practically, this means testing the cross-cultural competence framework for both consistent and unique operationalizations within the realm of NATO-EU relations. Although the data represent practical lessons learned for bridging the cultural divide between NATO and EU assignments for military officers, the results are more far-reaching.

First, and foremost, the practical results will inform leadership development for future officers responsible for navigating the NATO-EU interface.

Second, the thesis will add evidence to the discussion concerning the EU’s strategic culture. By testing 3C in NATO-EU operations, what is also being tested is the gap between NATO and EU strategic cultures. The prospective null hypothesis of this study would be that if the challenges described at the NATO-EU interface are not alleviated or explained by the factors of 3C, then it is unlikely that such a scenario can be classified as a cross-cultural interaction. This would provide evidence towards a lack of major differences between NATO and the EU’s strategic cultures.

Finally, this thesis serves to fill a gap in 3C literature which has thus far failed to address necessary KSAs for operating in a cooperative, multinational environment. Mainstream strategic culture research has predominantly focused on the governmental-level, but this study deepens that view by looking at internal functionality within the bearers of strategic culture on the sub-governmental level – where strategic culture actually happens.

## **4. Theoretical Framework**

As the Literature Review section highlighted, there are a number of ongoing debates concerning the major frameworks involved in this thesis. This thesis does not attempt to weigh in on certain technical debates about the validity of one school of thought over another. Instead, various aspects of the two major constituents, strategic culture and cross-cultural competence, are explored as they relate to one another. Certain theoretical assumptions are made to guide this study into a coherent analysis, not necessarily because they provide the deepest academic rigor in line with the theoretical debate of the day, but because they allow for more practical application of otherwise academic ideas. The focus of this thesis is on how individual leaders are affected by a defense partnership, and an analytic display of the entire research concept is provided in Figure 4 (p. 40). This section provides the lens with which the situation is viewed, by means of definitions, assumptions, and potential pitfalls.

### ***4.1 Socially constructed strategic culture***

#### ***4.1.1 Conceptualizing strategic culture***

The body of literature available concerning the EU-NATO relationship is vast and has been analyzed from any number of perspectives. However, most of this literature is predominantly descriptive rather than analytical. Much of what is discussed about the EU-NATO interface is the compatibility of the two organizations and the results each achieves in various scenarios. This is beneficial for exploring how cooperation can be better achieved in future operations but does little to understand how to navigate the EU-NATO interface presently. Specifically, when the question of the EU's strategic culture is raised, it is often approached by means of classifying or defining its approach to strategic issues. The most important question asked, according to Zyla (2011), is usually *how* is the EU different from other security actors? This thesis instead asks how those differences are manifested in day-to-day interactions in order to achieve practical guidance from an otherwise academic endeavor.

By doing so, this thesis avoids the redundancy of trying to trace the complex and interwoven relationship between various strategic documents which regulate EU-NATO cooperation. It also avoids all together the question of defining the EU's strategic culture. In this sense, this research builds from Zyla (2011) by offering analysis of the *impact* or *effect* of the EU's strategic culture. It logically follows, then, that if the EU has no distinct strategic culture, then there should be no effect on cultural norms between the strategic assets of both the EU and NATO. Therefore, this research adds depth to strategic culture study by examining the level where culture actually happens, among the relationships and daily activities of the individuals who make up the security and defense institution.

The constructivist perspective is needed to focus on the personal experience of strategic culture by those social actors affected by it. The constructivist paradigm provides greater depth to the intersubjective understanding of the challenges associated with adaptation to the EU. NATO and the EU are comprised of almost exactly the same groups and actors in military terms. However, because there are assumed cultural differences between the two, this points to certain behaviorisms and irrationalities which require synthesis via constructivist means. A rational approach may provide insight into the power dynamic of the interface or the 'give and take' of cultural values and behavioral norms from a competitive perspective. However, the social interaction involved is a process during which fundamental agent properties change through social learning. Constructivism and rationalism indeed complement one another in a wide view of adaptation, but this thesis focuses on the social interaction through the constructivist paradigm (Fearon & Wendt 2002). It is possible that such social norms create the challenges, which are then solved by rational behaviors in order to achieve success. In this case, both paradigms provide their own form of understanding. This is very much aligned with one of the preeminent strategic culturists', Colin S. Gray's, view on the subject. Gray contemplated retrospectively on the subject, "Should I lose sleep worrying about whether I am a neoclassical realist or a constructivist? Could I possibly be both? Well, I think I am indeed both" (Gray 2007, p. 3).

Strategic culture is understood here to be an independent or intervening variable within the constructivist paradigm. It serves to affect the behavior of social agents by influencing their perception of the world. Social actors, then, reproduce the norms and structures of society “by reflexively basing their actions on their acquired knowledge, habits, and routines” (Zyla 2011, p. 670). Thus, strategic culture explains the *why* behind the actions, and has allowed for closer analysis of the context in which social actors operate.

However, the current body of research tends to apply more constitutive theory to strategic culture than it does appeal for causality (see Norheim-Martinsen 2011, Zyla 2011, Johansen 2017, and others). Constitutive theory requires the researcher to ask questions such as “what” and “how possible” is strategic culture in a given scenario. This thesis uses constitutive theorizing as strictly non-causal. To borrow from Norheim-Martinsen (2011), “from this understanding, we can move on to pinpoint the social mechanisms through which strategic culture reveals itself” (Norheim-Martinsen 2011, p. 520). In line with Klein’s (1991) concept of bearers of strategic culture, military officers are presented as the platform through which strategic culture manifests.

The conceptualization of strategic culture for this thesis is built on such a constructivist, constitutive foundation. With only a very slight variation from the definition used by Myer (2005), this thesis defines strategic culture as *comprising the socially transmitted, identity-derived norms, ideas and patterns of behavior that are shared among a broad majority of actors and social groups within a given security community, which help to shape the pursuit of security and defense goals.*

Several features of this conceptualization stand out to support the goals of the thesis. First, the individual aspects of identity-derived norms, ideas, and patterns of behavior combine to represent an overarching understanding of the group’s relation to the outside world. There is a certain ‘way of doing business’ that is unique to a particular community and is a result of the community’s identity narrative. Second, strategic culture is a majoritarian concept which represents a wholistic tendency towards certain norms and behaviors. Just as national identities are debated within the group, strategic

culture can also be represented heterogeneously and debated among its members. However, this study takes a wholistic approach looking for generally majoritarian norms, ideas, and patterns of behavior. Finally, this definition draws on the sociological roots of strategic culture in general culture theories. Such a conceptualization adds depth to strategic culture studies by examining the individual, internal level.

It must be noted that this conceptualization immediately stirs certain questions about its assumptions and functionality. Three potential criticisms are worth addressing at this point. First, the proposed conceptualization, much like the constructivist literature of the first generation of strategic culture, is at risk of appearing tautological. That is, a theory that is true by nature of the form of the argument. The conceptualization includes behavior within the definition of strategic culture, which typically is an immediate indication of tautology in strategic culture literature. As a study in the realm of constitutive theory, this research avoids the question of causality between behavior and culture. The focus here is on what leadership knowledge and skills are required to navigate this interface and does not intend to make an explicit causal assertion on behalf of the existence or non-existence of an EU strategic culture in general.

Second, it may be argued that the requisite initial conditions have not been established for a strategic culture in the EU to warrant study. Snyder stressed that strategic culture should only be brought in to explain a phenomena once “a distinctive approach to strategy becomes ingrained in training, institutions, and force posture...[when] strategic culture had taken on a life of its own, distinct from the social interests that helped give rise to it” (Snyder 1990, p. 7). This is certainly an acceptable criticism to the validity of the given conceptualization. The EU continues to undergo certain institutional changes and developments in its foreign and security policy. This, in turn, questions whether the EU will ever fit Snyder’s criteria for an established strategic culture. Can a strategic culture truly become ingrained in an international institution if roles, constituent Member States, and the institutional environment consistently change? It is worth looking into these questions concerning the nature of NATO’s strategic culture as well. However, this thesis is constructed in such a way to serve as a barometer to sample the



development of an EU strategic culture. It may offer insight into some of these questions by continuing to ask the “what possible” questions.

Finally, this conceptualization assumes, as Zyla (2011) did, that the EU and NATO are sovereign and autonomous social actors that act independently of their member states. By taking a majoritarian approach towards the culture that exists in the EU’s security community, it assumes that there exists a supranational coalescence of norms, ideas, and patterns of behavior, and that this coalescence is unique to the international organization rather than simply a projection of national tendencies. Schmidt (2011) has argued that certain dominant member states, such as France and the United States in pursuit of their own interests in the EU and NATO, tend to dictate cultural notions within the organizations as well. Additionally, Cornish and Edwards (2001) highlighted how military structures continue to be governed under the Council of the EU and not the Commission. This maintains military operations out of strictly European control and opens the present conceptualization to such criticism. However, the decision-making mechanism of consensus in the Council ensures that the strategic actions undertaken serve as a compromise between national strategic cultures. There is no qualified majority voting on CSDP, meaning that decisions reached do indeed represent an autonomous approach to security challenges.

#### *4.1.2 Operationalizing strategic culture*

The operationalization of such a definition represents where this thesis makes its contribution to the discussion about the EU’s strategic culture and strategic culture studies as a whole. Operationalizing the concept requires specifying measures used to represent the broad aspects of the conceptualization. For the given definition of strategic culture, operationalization is accomplished in two parts.

First, “actors and social groups” are operationalized as military leaders. In a way, this is also a further conceptualization of the term by restricting the definition to actors in the military domain. As a study on military leadership, this qualification was selected for its applicability to the research purpose. Military leaders influencing the decision-making

process best represent the research object based on the importance of elites in representing a strategic culture (Johnston 1995, Snyder 1977, Snyder 1990, and others). The term could have been expanded to security decision makers, but that would have unnecessarily broadened the scope of the thesis. By focusing on actors as military leaders from NATO, a cultural contrast is more readily created when they operate across the NATO-EU interface. Few other EU representatives have such an opportunity to operate both independent to, as well as within, the EU at various points in their careers like military officers do, often in short succession. This makes for an easier to identify shift in cultural influences.

Military leaders are further defined here as those members of the military with command influence or higher policy input within the EU. The assorted below-command-level positions in constituent militaries will continue to be socialized in their national strategic culture, no matter which organization they currently serve under. Their jobs and decision-making processes do not change based on the organization which issues their tasking. However, from the unit commander level up through the top of the EU Military Staff (EUMS) and EU Military Committee (EUMC), leaders interact with strategic decisions and decision-making processes. The result is that such military commanders adequately represent the elites that are socialized in a strategic culture.

Second, “norms, ideas, and patterns of behavior” are operationalized as the factors of 3C. This study tests such an operationalization as a potential for future development of leadership training concerning navigating organizations with dissimilar strategic cultures. As Meyer noted, existing literature does “little to disaggregate the idea of strategic culture and provides almost no guidance on how to empirically analyze it in a contemporary context” (Meyer 2005, p. 524). By using 3C as a method of operationalizing such abstract ideas as norms, ideas, and patterns of behavior, this thesis offers potential utility for such a gap in empirical guidance. Additionally, such an operationalization provides for the necessary practical link between the concept of strategic culture and 3C.

The growing relationship and cooperation between the EU and NATO, two organizations that are assumed to possess differing strategic cultures, requires competent functionality by military leaders within both organizations. Academic work on strategic culture has thus far provided limited utility for those individuals conducting business and efficiently operating within the opposing structures. This thesis offers 3C as a means to better analyze such an interface.

#### ***4.2 Cross-cultural competence***

3C is specifically applied to the NATO-EU interface to identify any glaring characteristic differences in strategic culture highlighted by adapting to the EU environment. An operationalization, by definition, describes how an otherwise abstract concept is measure in a study. Here, the “norms, ideas, and patterns of behavior” are operationalized as 3C because the research object exists in the NATO-EU interface.

It follows, then, that the degree to which 3C KSAs are required in order to navigate the NATO-EU interface may be indicative of differences in strategic cultures. How the KSAs are employed or prioritized may also reflect certain elements of these strategic cultures. By using a second concept as the operationalization for a first creates the need for another conceptualization and operationalization discussion about the concept of 3C.

There is no shortage of explorations of 3C in the available literature. An annotated bibliography published by the US DoD cites more than 200 studies each concerned with 3C in the military domain (Gallus 2014). Conceptualization of 3C has remained reliably consistent throughout these endeavors. The widely accepted definition of 3C in the military context comes from Abbe et al (2007) and is the conceptualization that this thesis will utilize as well. 3C is defined as the “*set of knowledge, skills, and affect/motivation that enable individuals to adapt effectively in cross-cultural environments.*”

Several features of this conceptualization are worth noting as they apply to this thesis. Unlike in Ross et al (2010), Gabrenya et al (2012), and others, this thesis does not

attempt to further conceptualize “effective”, “success”, or other related notions. Doing so would present an unnecessary burden on the research and create validity issues which would detract from the overall goal of the research: to better understand how to navigate the NATO-EU interface. The subjective nature of these concepts is simply beyond the scope of this project. Furthermore, avoiding such a definition keeps this research aligned with the social constructivist paradigm. The actors involved are assumed to adjust to social constraints in order to blend with the norms and patterns of behavior in the new environment. Posing the interaction as a drive for “success” in competitive nature would invoke more of a realist or rational choice approach to the research problem.

Additionally, this thesis assumes that the research subjects operate between two different (strategic) cultures and that the EU environment is the “cross-cultural environment” to which an individual must adapt. It therefore rules out the notion of a “multi-cultural officer” who may be equally versed or socialized in EU protocol and culture. This assumption is based on the EU as a security actor and assumes that no officer identifies it as their main baseline for strategic decisions. In line with this assumption, most officers even go as far as to identify crossing the NATO-EU interface as a collateral duty to their NATO responsibilities. Such an assumption is validated within the research by having each subject identify NATO and the EU as the comfortable and less comfortable cultural environment. This is a unique challenge to this thesis because of the multi-national qualities of the organizations. Few other strategic culture studies encounter the real possibility that a social actor and research object may be socialized in both of the strategic cultures analyzed.

This conceptualization and use of strategic culture is not without its potential criticisms, as well. First, it may be argued that using the military-specific conceptualization of 3C is not a valid approach to the NATO-EU interface. Because of the bureaucratic and institutional characteristics of such a defense partnership, it would be reasonable to approach this study instead from the use of 3C in international industry. NATO and the EU represent two international organizations which do not fit the friend/foe environment envisaged by the military focus on 3C (ie., U.S. interactions in Iraq and

Afghanistan). NATO-EU relations may appear to better fit the organizational cross-culture literature available concerning international industries. This study, however, uses the military context of 3C in order to increase the applicability and wider utility of the study. By relating the research outcomes to what military leaders are already taught in their career about 3C, it will be easier to translate lessons learned for future training and development. If this study leads to an improved focus on training or preparation for an EU military assignment, then it should build from what military leaders already learn elsewhere in their career. Therefore, it is imperative to utilize the military focused approach to 3C.

The approach to 3C in this context leads this thesis to utilize the operationalization of 3C that is most prevalent in military-focused studies. Since Ross et al (2010) proposed a list of nine KSAAs for successful military cross-cultural interactions, various studies have added new concepts, eliminated previous ones, and combined a number of them into various categories. The hypothesized KSAAs of these studies are presented in Figure 3. This thesis operationalizes 3C as the six KSAAs of *self-efficacy*, *ethnocultural empathy*, *willingness to engage*, *cognitive flexibility*, *self-monitoring*, and *tolerance for ambiguity*.

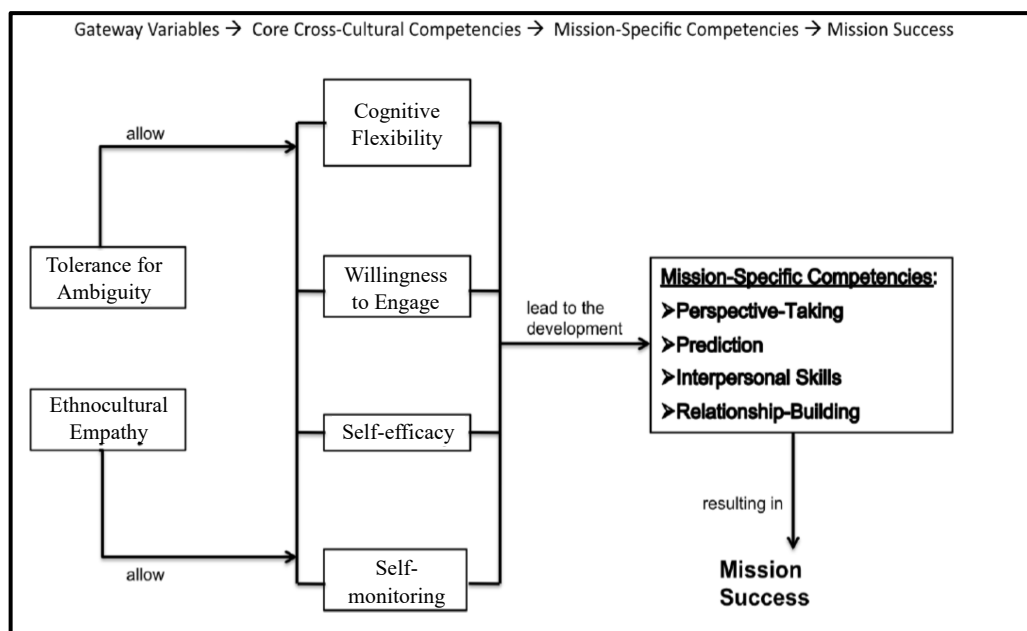


Figure 3. The hypothesized construct of cross-cultural competence (Ross et al 2010).

*Self-efficacy* is defined as the belief in one's own abilities to attain certain goals. An individual with self-efficacy believes he or she has the capabilities to execute necessary courses of action in order to manage difficult or complex situations. Such an individual has the fortitude to see a task to completion despite setbacks and challenges. It is important to note here the difference between self-efficacy and self-esteem. Self-esteem concerns one's assessment of his or her own worth in the world. It represents how important and valued he or she feels in a given context. Self-efficacy, however, is a perception of own's own ability to succeed. Self-efficacy manifests as traits such as commitment and perseverance.

*Ethnocultural empathy* is defined as the skill to detect, consider, and analyze others' views as well as their self-perception, behavior, and perception of others. This skill is commonly referred to in 3C literature as "perspective-taking". An individual with ethnocultural empathy is able to understand the emotions and requirements of another person or organization by relating characteristics of the other to their own approach. Such a skill manifests in genuine consideration for the challenges or restrictions placed on another person or organization.

*Willingness to engage* is defined as the ability to make sense of unfamiliar social situations in dissimilar cultures by involving oneself in the process. Similar to self-efficacy, it is a persistence to spend time in unfamiliar cultural situations often associated with an openness to new experiences. Willingness to engage is a skill beyond the characteristics of an extrovert, and manifests as curiosity and interest in dissimilar cultures.

*Cognitive flexibility* is defined as the ability to utilize a repertoire of rich mental models from which to choose the optimal strategy. An individual with this ability is flexible in his or her approach to challenges which enables him or her to solve a range of problems in complex situations. Such individuals have rationally reflected on previous experiences and known qualities to develop a range of mental models which help them process new situations more efficiently. Cognitive flexibility manifests as traits such as adaptability and innovation.

*Self-monitoring* is defined as the ability to modify behavior to comply with or demonstrate respect for others' values or customs. An individual with this ability can observe and adjust his or her own behavior in socially (or culturally) appropriate ways based on situational cues. This ability is closely related to emotional self-regulation and self-control. Such an ability prevents emotions from interfering with performance, a vital attribute of a leader, and adjusting appropriately. Self-monitoring manifests in individuals often attributed with tact, respect, courtesy, and amiability.

*Tolerance for ambiguity* is defined as open-mindedness in the face of confusion or uncertainty rather than a need for immediate closure or resolution. This term is often easier to explain in the negative, as an individual with a low tolerance for ambiguity. Such an individual has a preference for order and structure and is often reluctant to continue to search for a more optimal solution or way of doing things. This approach is often characterized by rigidity, dichotomous thinking, and ethnocentrism. A tolerance for ambiguity is often illustrated as indecisiveness, but in fact represents the patience and fortitude for complete evaluation.

These six KSAs represent the integral factors of 3C regarded in this study. Tolerance of ambiguity and ethnocultural empathy are regarded as antecedent variables. They are the inherent personal skills, the prerequisites, required for an individual to adequately achieve the four true cross-cultural competencies of self-efficacy, cognitive flexibility, willingness to engage, and self-monitoring (see Figure 3, p. 37).

In summary, this thesis explores 3C as an operationalization of strategic culture by investigating the KSAs (cross-cultural competencies) required to adapt to the necessary norms, ideas, and patterns of behavior when crossing the NATO-EU interface that are shared among actors and social groups (military leaders). As Figure 4 illustrates, this study provides a unique contribution to strategic culture literature by examining the internal functionality of the EU's strategic culture as it impacts the cultural adaptation of military leaders navigating the NATO-EU interface.

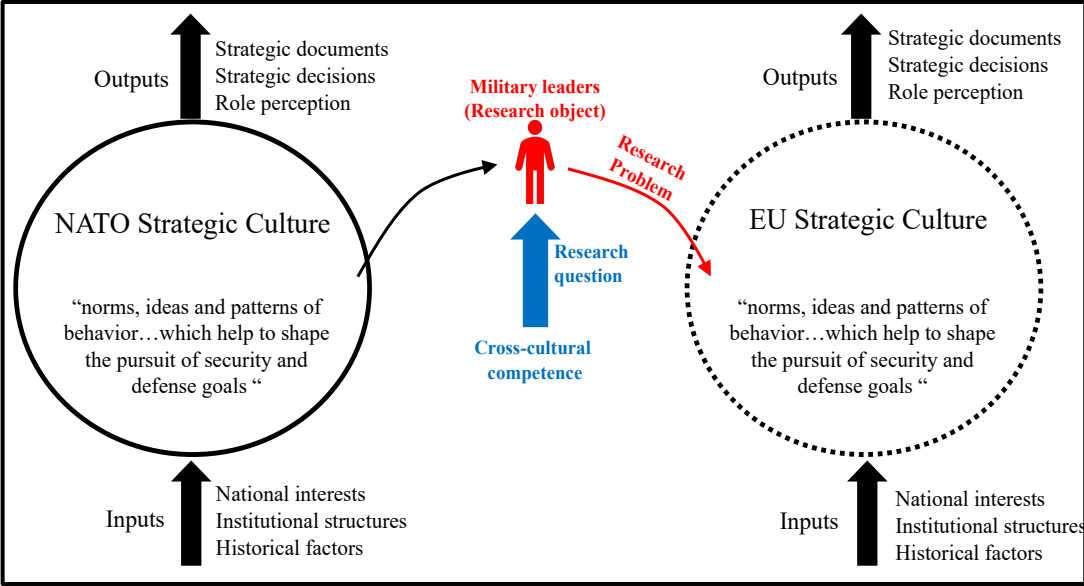


Figure 4. Analytic display of the theoretical framework of this thesis. The thesis presents a unique analysis of social actors adapting to a different strategic culture, which is significantly different from a majority of existing strategic culture literature. (Researcher's own)



## **5. Methodology**

### ***5.1 Inductive & deductive design***

This thesis is a unique study in the literature by examining strategic culture from the perspective of its internal workings at an intimate level. Such a constrained framework focuses the aspects of the research design, and in turn, guides the researcher through the steps for sampling, investigative procedures, and analysis by consistently referring to a limited focus within the research question. Overall, the research design is an exploratory study which utilizes semi-structured elite interviews to provide inductive validity and concept expansion to a previously deductively compiled operationalization.

The research question does little to automatically limit the scope of possible research, and in many ways, it is easier to speak of what this thesis does not cover rather than what it does. It is not the intention to analyze or classify EU strategic culture in its entirety. The aim is to contribute to both the fields of strategic culture and 3C within the appropriate scope of an MA thesis. By adding 3C to the research problem, it further constrains the framework of the thesis because it is not looking at the entire list of requirements to adapt to the EU's strategic culture. It disregards administrative and institutional factors in favor of the personal-level behavioral norms that are required. Such a framework dictates the aspects of sampling and instrumentation discussed below.

As a means to explore the relevance of 3C as it applies to operationalizing strategic culture, this thesis draws on limited precedence in the field. The most similar previous study was conducted by Ross (2008) as the U.S. Army set out to operationalize 3C for future military training and evaluation. As the goal of this thesis is to provide insight into how to best prepare for an assignment within the NATO-EU interface, it is logical that it will share similarities to the Ross study. Specifically, this study takes both an inductive and deductive approach to 3C. The literature review in the fields of strategic culture and 3C are thorough and sought to identify the most compelling factors of the 3C construct. This deductive approach allows for focused attention on the military-specific application of 3C which is already prevalent in NATO training curricula for

military commanders. However, a potential contribution of this thesis is to identify anywhere that the literature fails to explain the cross-cultural dynamic of the NATO-EU interface. For this, an inductive approach is also required.

The inductive approach to 3C in the EU-NATO interface increases the validity and adequacy of the 3C factors in the particular relationship. First, it allows the researcher to test the applicability of the inductively determined KSAs for interacting in a cross-cultural environment as it applies to the NATO-EU interface. The list of six KSAs derived from previous literature serve as the initial benchmark of 3C. When analyzing a particular cross-cultural interaction, these factors will be particularly scrutinized to better assess how much value each provides to understanding the cultural interaction. Second, an inductive approach also allows for the identification of previously unnoticed or disregarded KSAs which play a role in the NATO-EU interface. The researcher may identify unique factors essential for overcoming cultural differences between two different strategic cultures or determine a new precedence of 3C factors that is unique to a divide in strategic cultures. The inductive approach is accomplished through semi-structured elite interviews, as described in the instrumentation section below.

The cases examined consist of those particular military leaders who have encountered the NATO-EU interface, and not those who observe or interact with them. It does not ask EU professionals to comment second-hand on the adaptation of a military officer to an EU role in their institution. Additionally, this study is not concerned with similar transitions between strategic cultures in more general terms, such as exchange program officers or commanders within joint task forces because the NATO-EU interface is most applicable to the modern context and debate. Possibilities for future study exist in taking a broader approach to multinational leadership across strategic culture boundaries, but this study looks specifically at the NATO-EU interface. Within this case, there are potential subcases as well, depending on where or who the officer worked for within the EU. It may be tempting to investigate the differences between cultural adjustment required to be seconded into the EUMS compared to an EU operational command, for example. This thesis, however, remains a general investigation of officers navigating the NATO-EU interface.

The thesis takes a case-oriented approach and performs cross-case analysis as opposed to a variable-oriented approach. As such, it values interpretive synthesis over strict analysis by inspecting relevant data for themes and components which improve the understanding of cross-cultural interactions. Those elements are then rebuilt into an “ordered whole”, and applied to the appropriate social context which is, in this case, a military leader crossing the NATO-EU interface (Denzin 2001). Cross-case analysis improves the generalizability of the study, with certain precautions. By examining multiple cases, understanding and explanation is deepened and aids the researcher in forming more general categories of how certain factors are related.

### *5.2 Sampling for diverse experiences within the interface*

The first sampling decision made in this research was to bound the case to military commanders involved with the decision-making process at the unit commander level and above. The sub-unit commander or officer, the strike officer on a destroyer for example, does not make strategic decisions and is therefore not required to adapt to a different role when operating on an EU or NATO mission. Unit commanders and above, including those on EU staffs, must adapt to the strategic environment presented by their assignment. Such a well-developed conceptualization of the case to be studied naturally guides the initial conditions for further sampling decisions. This thesis’ aim is to achieve analytic generality by seeking comparable data for cross-case comparability in order to get a better idea of the underlying core constructs and factors at play across all cases.

To avoid excessively narrow sampling, this thesis investigates a broad range of cases within the constraints of the conceptualization. This includes diverse viewpoints of recently retired officers (within the past 2 years) as well as unit commanders in operations and staff headquarters outside of Brussels. Each instance, or setting, of the NATO-EU interface will share some properties with all other cases, some properties with some other cases, and some properties with no other cases. By compiling the

similarities, it makes the findings more generic and improves generalizability to the overall NATO-EU interface.

Including in the case sampling are officers representing non-EU allied nations in NATO. Although it is, of course, more likely for an officer from an EU nation to interact more closely with the EU on various operations or staffs, it is important to also include in the sample pool non-EU officers. Strategic cultural differences between NATO and the EU may be even more pronounced for non-EU partners, especially from North America, and such a contrasted perspective serves to better fulfill the desire to sample from the entire NATO-EU interface.

This thesis employs a small sample size in order to achieve more in-depth study. The sample is set to 7 cases, which is much smaller than alternative quantitative or even some qualitative approaches. Because of the small number of cases to be analyzed in intimate detail, sampling in this thesis is done purposively rather than random. The purposive sampling performed is theory-driven. Sampling is done to select a small number of representative cases covering the entire NATO-EU interface to include unit commanders on EU operations, Operational Headquarters Staffs outside of Brussels, as well as the EUMS and cooperation efforts between NATO and the European Defense Agency. This provides for generalizations that are more likely to apply to EU strategic culture as a whole, and therefore be more applicable to any officer encountering the NATO-EU interface.

Beyond the purposive sampling across the NATO-EU spectrum of military relationships, convenience sampling was further employed. The focus through convenience sampling was to focus on the time, resources, and access available to a single researcher conducting an MA thesis. As such, personal connections were utilized to reach the highest leadership levels possible (the 'most elite' elites socialized in the strategic culture) for case analysis, and operational unit commanders were selected from the current class of the senior leadership course at Baltic Defence College in Tartu, Estonia. Because there is such a large pool of officers with experience operating as a unit commander under the EU, sampling from the Baltic Defence College is assumed to

be a random selection of that representative sample. Of course, convenience sampling creates a set of potential biases by linking personal networking to the case selection. It is possible that the sample may only include like-minded individuals, or those who are not disenchanted with their experience in NATO and the EU. Individuals willing to sit for interviews, at some level, believe that there is knowledge to be passed on and lessons to be learned about this scenario. This criticism and potential bias is noted, and was minimized in case selection by achieving three interviews by means of “cold calling” officers outside of the researcher’s personal network who fit the sampling criteria (Cases 2, 3, and 7).

### ***5.3 Semi-structured elite interviews***

The most effective instrumentation method for cultural analysis is likely ethnography, as noted from the researcher’s previous experience. The goal for analysis is to observe and record as many details about the nature of how an officer must adapt to the NATO-EU interface via norms, ideas, and patterns of behavior. However, in the scope of such a project as this thesis, the time, resources, and access present an insurmountable obstacle to effectively executing an ethnographic research design. The research question concerns *how* one adapts to the EU environment points the researcher to semi-structured interviews. This thesis applies 3C principles from previous studies to strategic culture, but also searches for new elements as well. Semi-structured interviews are used to accomplish both of these tasks.

Two key challenges are shared amongst 3C studies which employ semi-structured interviews within their methodology. First, there is often ambiguity involved with classifying a variable either as an antecedent to 3C, a personality trait, or a factor of the construct itself (Trejo et al. 2015, p. 277). An interview subject will infrequently distinguish between a skill or ability *employed* to adapt to a different environment and a personality aspect which they use to approach all problems. Recent 3C research has found a breakthrough in this regard by using Task-Analysis models which focus on specific behavioral examples (*ibid.*). In a Task-Analysis interview, the researcher asks the interviewee to identify specific behavioral examples that are essential to job

performance. This is accomplished by having the subject describe what his or her tasks entailed and how they were performed. With a focus on the behavioral aspects, the dissimilarity between antecedent and factor becomes clearer.

Second, interview-based 3C studies rely on critical incident narratives. These critical incidents often serve as the focal point for an interviewee to describe the strengths and weaknesses demonstrated in one particular cross-cultural interaction. This serves as the basis of the narrative provided in the interview. In a partnership like NATO and the EU, it is more difficult to identify critical incidents. Interviewees typically interacted on a slower and longer-term basis with the EU's strategic culture. This is a more nuanced 'incident' for example, than an interaction between a local and soldier in Afghanistan, the scenario for which the critical incident narrative technique was developed. As a substitute, this thesis begins with the interviewee's first impression of the EU as a cooperative partner. This serves to highlight the point where EU norms, ideas, and patterns of behavior were less familiar to the subject than after prolonged exposure to the culture.

Pre-screening criteria for interview subjects was developed in accordance with the sampling decisions previously discussed. Selection for interviews was supported by asking potential subjects if all of the following statements apply:

1. You have had at least one role as a unit commander or above in which you interacted directly with the EU as a security and defense actor.
2. Your role forced you to interact with the EU regularly.
3. You have experience in NATO as a unit commander or above.
4. You believe you have gained some level of competence in understanding how to interact with the EU in the military domain.
5. You have first-hand experience with decision-making in the EU environment.
6. You are comfortable openly discussing in an unclassified (UNCLAS) forum, in English, your thoughts on such topics. Anonymity will be maintained.

The interview guide (Appendix C) was developed by the researcher prior to the first interview and was consistently updated based on lessons learned about the order, wording, and applicability of certain questions. It is important to note that interview questions did not use wording such as “do well”, “effective”, or “success” because conceptualization of these terms was not made for this study. The distinction of “success” was avoided, or the interview subject was allowed to make his or her own conclusions about the quality of interactions or adaptation. Interview questions, instead, focused on influence or understanding in order to avoid validity issues concerning the use of “successful adaptation” to the EU strategic culture. Additionally, interviews were transcribed on Microsoft Word and then transferred to MAXQDA for storing the data.

The interview process began with an overview of the project and an explanation of the informed consent form (Appendix B). Necessary background information was collected for the subjects and recorded in the interview matrix (Appendix A). Once permission to begin recording was obtained, the interview guide was followed by the researcher in a semi-structured format, meaning that flexibility was provided for topics previously discussed, or a mention of a later topic within an earlier answer, in addition to further probes.

Probes of 3C factors were accomplished by two different approaches. First, in some cases the research question was asked directly of the participant. This took the form of “how did you have to adjust to the environment in the EU?” It has been acknowledged in most previous 3C studies that 3C factors are very difficult to identify in self-reporting scenarios. Interview subjects have difficulty identifying behavioral characteristics they employed to deal with a cross-cultural situation. This study found the same results. Instead, the researcher substituted a question that required the same reflection but avoided the natural bias of a self-reported characteristic. Better answers were provided when the interview subject was asked to provide advice for a less experienced officer about to take on the same role.

#### *5.4 Coding & interpretive analysis*

This thesis applied content analysis techniques to the interview transcript data obtained from the interviews. Data analysis was performed concurrently with data collection in order to reflect on existing data and refine strategies for collecting more applicable data in further interviews. Transcription into MAXQDA and processing the data as samples of text meant that the words recorded were the data analyzed and not the tone or body language of the interviewee. This can be difficult to analyze as the only source of data and is especially difficult when dealing with non-native English speakers who may not be very comfortable expounding on topics such as cultural adaptation in English. Certainly, some of the nuance of the data was lost simply by the selection of the analytic method for data processing.

In content analysis, codes were applied to the text data in order to identify the most critical aspects related to the research questions. As Saldaña (2016, p. 5) noted, coding is primarily an interpretive act. A code can sometimes summarize, distill, or condense the data instead of simply reducing them to appropriate categories. The First Cycle coding was done in order to identify the 3C factors operationalized within the Theoretical Framework of this thesis, and also for other ideas or behaviors related to cultural adjustment. These initial codes serve as prompts for deeper reflection in later analysis.

Much like the nature of this study, codes were also developed both inductively and deductively. Deductive codes were used as a provisional “start list” from the conceptual framework of the study. Key variables were identified both in general terms and their manifestations as indicated by previous studies. It is easier for the researcher to identify the manifestations of the 3C factors as behavioral nouns (eg. “curiosity” instead of “willingness to engage”, “patience” instead of “tolerance of ambiguity”, etc). Furthermore, inductive coding was used to investigate beyond the given 3C framework of cultural interaction. Induced codes emerge progressively during data collection. In this case, the researcher sought strategies for cross-cultural interaction which did not fit



the conceptualized dimensions of the 3C construct. It is possible that certain unique factors play a role in the NATO-EU interface.

A code book was maintained and contained clear operational definitions of each code used (Appendix D). The code book is the most important factor for replicability of the study, especially when considering that this research did not have the resources available for verified coding with a second (or more) researcher. Definitions within the code book were fine tuned to reduce ambiguity for coding and differentiating between similar factors. Despite the fact that coding was done by one researcher, reliability was increased by second and third attempts at coding unmarked copies of the data after more than 5 days away from it. An 85% match standard was applied to such repeated coding efforts in order to ensure that the biases of a single researcher were reduced.

First Cycle coding utilized three specific techniques. First, holistic coding was performed to provide descriptive codes of the overall contents within the data. Certain notable categories and general terms were used in order to focus coding on relevant data in the future. Some aspects of the interviews did not directly apply to the cross-cultural interaction sought by this study. Second, In Vivo coding was used to identify words or short phrases directly from the language of the data. This honored the participants voice and allowed the researcher to better identify how certain 3C factors may appear in later data. Third, emotion coding was used to identify the interpersonal interactions and the perspectives of the interview subject. These emotional factors are indicative of a learning process, and therefore point to specific areas where cross-cultural adaptation may have occurred. Finally, provisional coding was used to deliberately analyze the data with the operationalized factors directly in mind. Provisional coding is especially applicable to studies which build on previous research, as this thesis builds on the works of Ross (2008, 2010). The list of 6 KSAAAs was used for guided analysis of the data, but was also revised, modified, deleted, and expanded as necessary when going through the coding process.

Once each first cycle method was thoroughly completed, the researcher was faced with a vast number of various emotions, skills, and actions that were identified as part of the

cultural adaptation process. Second cycle coding was used to consolidate these codes into general categories of 3C in order to condense the data into smaller analytic units. By doing so, the researcher was able to identify certain data which stood out enough to be coded in the first cycle but did not appropriately fit with a larger category. These types of data forced the researcher to consider whether they represented an additional factor of 3C not represented within the assumed 6 KSAs.

Finally, pattern codes (second cycle) were transferred to general patterns in both narrative and matrix form. Both methods selected are a type of data analysis in their own right by choosing to present the data in a certain way. Narrative description of the noted patterns is presented in the Results section of this thesis which allows for a more nuanced explanation of what the researcher found in the data. The matrix form (Table 1), represents how the factors of 3C appeared within each interview. The matrix presentation of the data is most similar to previous 3C studies, specifically Ross (2008, 2010).

In summary, the methodology of this case-oriented study employed semi-structured elite interviews across multiple cases to better understand the research question as it was appropriately constrained by concise conceptualizations. Content analysis was then used to code the data and identify consistent patterns relevant to the necessary norms, ideas, and patterns of behavior for adapting to a cross-cultural situation.

## 6. Results & Analysis

*“You are certainly asking military officers to deal in the department of state, in a beast that they have never been used to dealing with before. So, it is a big shock, and I think that presents some big problems.”*

*- Case 2*

The fieldwork for this study was accomplished in February and March 2019. Seven semi-structured interviews were conducted with individuals who fulfilled the sampling criteria and is reflected in the interview matrix (Appendix A). All interviewees had been assigned roles in their military careers which dealt directly with both the EU and NATO. The interview sample consisted of four officers remaining on active duty and three of whom are retired. Included in the sample were also two representatives from non-EU NATO countries, both from the United States. Overall, five interviewees were naval officers and two were from the army. This variation derives from the operational distinction between the two services. Finding a unit commander with operational experience on an EU mission means looking to EU naval missions. With *Operation Sophia* and *Operation Atalanta*, naval commanders represent the current perspective on strategic military operations (not peace-keeping) under the EU flag.

Access to interviewees, and trust in the research topic, was supported by the researcher’s own background. A tone of mutual understanding was quickly established in each interview as the researcher presented himself as a naval lieutenant conducting research on a prestigious exchange scholarship program. The fact that the researcher comes from the United States and has no EU military experience also improved the content of the interviews. Subjects could therefore focus on explaining their experiences in the EU, specifically what was new or different, without the need to explain the military intricacies of their roles or NATO background.

Research data (interview transcripts) were stored in MAXQDA. Processing the data for each case required significant interpretive analysis. Because the semi-structured interviews were not a strict survey in question-answer format, much more interpretive analysis of what was said, and what was not said, was required from the researcher.

Two main perspectives were present in each interview: the advice perspective and the task analysis perspective. The difference in how the data was presented, and in what way the 3C KSAs appeared, varied depending on which perspective the subject was speaking from. An advice perspective had the potential to highlight a KSA as it would manifest in behavior. This represents the clearest allusion to such a KSA. The task analysis perspective, however, required almost an inverse interpretation by the researcher. For example, interview data concerning a frustration or particularly challenging aspect do not explicitly refer to a particular KSA, since KSAs are assumed to be beneficial behaviors which relieve such frustrations. It is up to the researcher to interpret which KSA or KSAs would best satisfy the challenge expressed within the data. Such a contrast makes it difficult to generalize all interview data together as an entire set and reinforces the methodology of thorough case-oriented analysis before applying cross-case analysis. This highlights the interpretive process taken on by the researcher to achieve a complete understanding of the data available as it applied to leadership lessons learned and best practices.

Each of the seven interview subjects had completed varying degrees of reflection on their EU leadership experience. Therefore, the depth and quality of understanding varied between interviews. Some of the most applicable data came from descriptions of experiences and individual adjustments to the EU environment, typically in the task analysis perspective. Other rich data existed in passing on advice to future leaders in the advice perspective. Which perspective created better data, the researcher found, speaks to the amount the interview subject had previously reflected on similar topics. Many of the interview subjects, it is worth noting, were not very cross-culturally competent by their own admission, just as Ross (2010) had found with her interview subjects. Therefore, the findings are not directly an analysis of their expertise in cross-cultural interactions between NATO and the EU, but rather an analysis of observations from a range of officers about the nature and challenges of the NATO-EU interface. The researcher was responsible for determining what, from these observations and experiences, constitutes cross-cultural competence or causes such competence to develop.

Interpretive analysis was performed consistent with the constructivist paradigm of the research design. The researcher specifically assessed the behavioral aspects of the subjects' experiences. Although expressed opinion was considered as relevant data in each interview when the question asked created an opportunity for such reflection, interpretive analysis instead focused on the narrative description of the experience. The narrative provided a better opportunity to assess how each subject made their adjustment because of prevailing social influences. Opinions, especially those expressed by military officers, tend to be rational and driven by goal accomplishment. Analysis here instead focused on finding the social integration factors which would be inherent in a strategic culture.

For example, the integrated approach of a job in the EU was described in Case 2. He described an environment, forced by both the need for consensus and small-actor role of the military, of constant interaction with a diversity of policy actors. It required him, unlike in any previous role, to physically visit different offices within the EU for meetings and discussions with other policy actors. Such behavior of interaction and involvement was required in order to function within "the elaborate nature of the EU", and not necessarily as part of a rational pursuit of mission accomplishment. This portion of data was then coded as "Willingness to Engage" because it highlighted the social need to participate in diverse discussions for fear of being "left out of the conversation and having the military's role defined for us."

### ***6.1 Case-by-case analysis***

The data are presented here in narrative form as individual case summaries which identify and elaborate on the pattern codes. Such prosaic representation of the data provides valuable context to the findings. Table 1, the matrix form summary, identifies the number of instances each hypothesized KSAA was coded in the data. Additionally, a percentage of overall stress given to each KSAA is calculated. This approach aims to mediate the imbalance of a single passing reference and a long, passionate description by applying a weighting factor which can be represented in matrix form. The cross-case

total occurrences is not represented in percentages because of the varying length and style of interview subjects. Because one subject tends to go into more descriptive detail than another means that such an overall calculation is not comparable.

Interviews are classified by whether the interview subject dealt with the NATO-EU interface on the strategic/staff level or the operational/unit commander level. What is missing from Table 1 is an appreciation for the true weighting associated with each mention of a KSAA. Even with the percentage calculation provided, little knowledge is achieved from such a matrix construction. This weakness is common to most previous 3C studies, as well. The narrative explanation intends to provide necessary interpretive explanations because the results in Table 1 are also be a function of the questions asked during the interview, the topics covered in the interview, and not necessarily the importance of a particular factor.

*Table 1. Cross-cultural competence factor occurrences in interview data (and as a percentage of overall 3C coded excerpts in each case)*

Case	Operational/ Strategic	Self- efficacy	Ethnocultural Empathy	Willingness to Engage	Cognitive Flexibility	Self- monitoring	Tolerance for Ambiguity
1	Strategic	0 (0)	8 (38)	3 (30)	4 (20)	1 (7)	1 (5)
2	Strategic	7 (9)	9 (22)	10 (31)	4 (9)	5 (9)	2 (20)
3	Strategic	1 (9)	3 (19)	2 (27)	5 (45)	0 (0)	0 (0)
4	Operational	0 (0)	1 (12)	1 (21)	0 (0)	1 (4)	5 (63)
5	Operational	2 (10)	1 (2)	1 (5)	2 (20)	1 (5)	8 (58)
6	Operational	6 (40)	0 (0)	4 (27)	1 (7)	0 (0)	4 (26)
7	Strategic	1 (2)	1 (22)	6 (43)	1 (7)	2 (9)	3 (14)
	<b>Total:</b>	17	23	27	17	10	23

**Case 1** consisted of a non-EU NATO officer with significant experience operating on NATO staffs in cooperation with the EU. His impression of the NATO-EU relationship can be characterized as improving from “adversarial” to “more cooperative” over the past few years. Part of this perspective is manifest in a negative attitude towards the confusion associated with compensating for “EU weakness”. The most significant

KSAA to appear in this case was *ethnocultural empathy*. This stemmed from an unwillingness to interact in cooperative assignments based on a failure to understand the shortcomings or limitations on the EU. Although cooperation, he acknowledged, would be rational and beneficial, he described a “stand off” resulting from a lack of empathy between the two sides. An improved understanding of the goals and limitations of the other culture, through the ability to take on the EU’s perspective of cooperation, would serve to alleviate some of the challenges identified in this interview.

Additionally, this interview stressed a need for more fluid and open communications between the two organizations, emphasizing the necessity of a *willingness to engage*. He described a failure of the EU to reciprocate a liaison position at another NATO office separate from his own. Due to the social pressures within NATO, that perception permeated into his office and spurred the “adversarial” nature of his relationship with the EU. This is more of a reflection of the “closed ranks” culture within NATO, especially between national compatriots, but highlights the need for both organizations to participate in one another’s endeavors in order to build trust and confidence through increased exposure.

**Case 2** represents the case where the most prior reflection had been done about the NATO-EU interface. The subject was a former Deputy Director General of the EUMS and represented an insightful perspective on adjusting to the dynamics of the EU. He described encountering the NATO-EU interface as a broadening experience. “I think there was a degree of naiveté in the way NATO operates, which I didn’t realize until I got to the EU.” Each hypothesized KSAA was alluded to throughout the data, but the strongest indicator was a *willingness to engage*. This was evident from the strong push to advocate for exposure to the EU system by becoming involved in the process. He worked to create a 6-month internship for junior officers to familiarize themselves with the EU processes, “to just get a smell of the place.” This arose from frustration he had with his more junior personnel’s lack of understanding of the EU structure. The bureaucratic nature of the EU created “career fonctionnaires” which forced the seconded national experts, especially in the military, into the role of naïve apprentices on navigating the mammoth structure. He felt earlier exposure could shift the power

dynamic in these conversations and negotiations with more knowledgeable officers comfortable in the EU structure.

He also described the benefits of leaving the office to go meet and interact with the other levers of power in the EU. Simply put, an officer's role in NATO does not require such cross-policy negotiation but taking the proverbial 'seat at the table' is the way of influencing policy in the EU. Such an approach, he argued, would also lead to "the necessary realization that we [NATO] are not profound to all knowledge".

The second most significant KSAA expressed within Case 2 is *tolerance for ambiguity*. He explained the personal patience that is required to endure the EU process, which is often long-term. He described learning the approach of not overworking the problem to find a solution quickly, and specifically the benefits of that approach in dealing with the long-term impact of the EU's missions in and around Somalia. The EU functions and decides at a different speed than he was used to, which required adjustment.

*Ethnocultural empathy* was nearly equally emphasized as the ability to take on the EU's perspective. "NATO," he explained, "operates at extremes requiring military interventions, but normal people do not live in extremes". A military officer must be able to take on the civilian nation-building perspective and considerations in order to better relate to the EU's military tasks. In inter-agency negotiations as well, this empathy serves to help an officer better frame his or her negotiations relative to other voices. Holistically, this interview represented the most congruent view of the NATO-EU interface as a cross-cultural interaction requiring the entire spectrum of cross-cultural competence.

**Case 3** consisted of another non-EU NATO officer who was directly responsible for high-level project coordination with the EU. Consistently referred to in his words as the need to be adaptable, the strongest KSAA apparent in this case was *cognitive flexibility*. This was presented as the ability to consider the capabilities and requirements of the EU as opposed to a "single minded" NATO track. Specific experiences in this case concerned innovation and cooperation leading to mutually beneficial outcomes as a result of weighing the possible solutions of a particular challenge. Specifically, he



sighted how smoothly his EU counterparts balanced their national and supranational responsibilities. He found himself taking longer to understand the perspectives of various security institutions, like NATO and the EU, by viewing them as separate from his role in the US Army. Coordinating with the EU, he explained, required more constant synthesizing of the various perspectives. Rich mental models of how to approach challenges will allow for the flexibility and adaptability of an officer in considering possible solutions.

To acquire these mental models, however, requires a strong *willingness to engage* in order to learn about the EU's processes. One root cause for a lack of mental models appears to be a lack of experience in handling national and supranational interests simultaneously. This creates the necessity for officers to serve in multinational environments in order to better develop appropriate mental models for cooperation.

**Case 4** involved a unit commander with recent SNMG2 experience as well as experience in *Operation Atalanta*. The recurring KSAA within this data was *tolerance for ambiguity*. He described the frustrations of adapting to *Atalanta* due to less solidified objectives and directives. He found significant room for interpretation of EU policy among various units conducting *Atalanta*, which made unit cohesion more difficult to maintain. Specifically, he noted how the EU adopted NATO procedures and protocols for its own missions. However, the EU versions were written less succinctly and with less actionable direction. This caused a feeling of uneasiness that he would not operate exactly aligned with the EU's vision. He encountered less cohesion among fellow unit commanders because of this ambiguity. The EU, in fact, allows for more nuanced interpretation from unit commanders rather than the lock-step alignment found in NATO. This approach certainly requires adjustment for military commanders. He, in turn, preferred his work in SNMG2 based on the clarity and unity of the missions. Because the military unit played a smaller role in the overall objective of *Atalanta* compared to an SNMG2 operation, it was necessary to wait for more long-term objective achievement in the face of uncertainty.

**Case 5** similarly stressed the need for *tolerance for ambiguity* from a unit commander. His experience as a unit commander in NATO's *Operation Ocean Shield* and as flagship commander for the EU's *Operation Sophia* created a useful contrast. Down to the details of the tasking, he noted that NATO's structure and clarity is formatted with bullet point and clear direction. The EU's directives "read like a book or story." Again, the unit commander plays a smaller role in an EU mission. Compared to *Ocean Shield* where his responsibilities covered tactical and some political duties, he found that less responsibility was given to unit commanders in the EU mission. His role was more scripted and added "that is frustrating. It's belittling." He did recognize the need for patience and the slower pace with which *Sophia* objectives are achieved emphasizing that capacity building is a slow process. This perspective is very similar to that found in Case 4, in feeling that there is more he should be doing to support the success of the overall mission.

In relating his experience in a perceived "background role" throughout his time in *Operation Sophia*, he also described an expectation that he be prepared to respond at any moment. This came through strongly as a need for *cognitive flexibility*. The EU decision-making process is slow and focused on consensus building. However, he explained that once a decision to move forward was achieved, there was swift demand on him to provide operational possibilities and recommendations. This required broad mental models built from previous experiences to quickly and effectively determine the optimal course of action. The root cause, it appeared, was the EU's expectation that once consensus was reached on a proposed action, then the military would immediately be ready to respond.

**Case 6** emphasized the personal commitment necessary to navigate the NATO-EU interface. The case consisted of a background as a prior unit commander in NATO taking an operational role at *Operation Atalanta* Headquarters. The most telling factor in this case was *self-efficacy*. He asserted, "As long as I can take my own approach and my own way of doing things, then I am sure that wherever I am going or what I am doing then I have something to contribute." Such a personal confidence and belief in one's own abilities allows for the perseverance and commitment to overcome certain

hurdles to integration within the EU system. What he described at *Atalanta* headquarters was an environment of nationally-minded individuals lacking true team-like cohesion. The social situation of isolation and distrust forced him to trust his own operational competence more than he had done in the past. He characterized the EU staff as exhibiting less initiative for cooperation than he had encountered in previous assignments. This requires an officer to draw less on the collective momentum of those around him and more on his own determination. This is where *self-efficacy* proves vitally important.

Similarly, he also reflected on the *willingness to engage*. An officer involved in the EU decision-making process must take on the responsibility to “knock on doors and talk to people” in order to better understand how they best fit in to the system. In the same description about an isolated social environment, it became clear that his personal initiative led to developing camaraderie and cohesion on the staff. In such a social environment, it seems that *self-efficacy* certainly spurred personal expansion into a *willingness to engage*. This calls into question the assumption of *self-efficacy* as a 3C component factor rather than an antecedent variable (see Figure 3, p. 37). This finding is elaborated on at the end of section 6.2.

**Case 7** represents the case with the most experience at the highest level of NATO-EU cooperation. He served as a division chief on the EU Military Staff, and then as an Assistant Secretary General of NATO for policy and planning. The subject was able to speak to deep experience in navigating the NATO-EU interface in both directions, and efforts to “teach” EU integration upon his return to NATO. He regards learning to operate within the EU as “a particular challenge for a military officer who was not trained and educated in this regard.” The recommended approach to this challenge takes the form of a *willingness to engage*. He stressed the importance of seeking out opportunities to interact with the EU in order to better learn the intricacies and focus of EU missions. He described a security environment in the EU where military voices are not always the most relied upon or even heard. In order to adapt to that institutional prioritization, it benefits officers to gain experience within the decision-making structure. Not because it is an inferior system, but because it requires deeper

understanding than a military commander would typically have of EU decision-making on security matters. Such an open approach to cooperation will lead a military officer “to recognize and understand that the focus in the EU, when it comes to supporting partners and other nations, is a primarily civilian or political responsibility.” The different type of objectives held by the EU, from what a NATO officer might be used to, requires deliberate engagement in order to better understand the strategic objectives.

The second factor most prevalent in this case was *ethnocultural empathy*. This case represented the most nuanced explanation of the role of ethnocultural empathy required for integration. Much of this coding overlapped with *willingness to engage*, as well. He described a general assumption he believed most NATO officers held in their first interaction with the EU: that CSDP structures were weaker, less effective, and more poorly organized, than similar structures in NATO. This only exacerbated the “adversarial” relationship between the two institutions. His leadership responsibility entailed encouraging those under him to take an empathetic approach to the organizations’ differences, by explaining, “There is also an emotional side to it [NATO-EU cooperation] ...I stressed the importance of trustful, collegiate relationships with our counterparts.” Improved emotional understanding from both sides led to more productive cooperation on policy issues.

## **6.2 Cross-case analysis**

Three specific findings are clear when conducting cross-case analysis of the entire data set. First, that there is a general trend throughout each case to emphasize a *willingness to engage*. Second, that *tolerance for ambiguity* is particularly necessary at the unit commander level. Finally, that the impact of the two previously mentioned KSAs (*willingness to engage* and *tolerance for ambiguity*) may be enhanced through ‘regional specific’ training on the EU. The 3C principles derived from the deductive approach in this research were confirmed within the data. The inductive analysis did not identify any new or additional KSAs for consideration to improve the 3C model. This fact lends further credibility to the 3C model derived from the literature in the deductive portion of this study. However, it is recommended that the hypothesized structure of the 3C construct be slightly altered to include *self-efficacy* as a gateway variable.

The most significant KSAA to approaching the NATO-EU interface is embracing a *willingness to engage*. This particular factor was readily prevalent in each case analyzed and signified the most consistent trend across all cases. *Willingness to engage* takes the form of an open-minded approach to the unknown entity, in this case the EU. The factor is epitomized by seeking out opportunities for interaction in order to develop better familiarity with the EU as an institution. It is assumed that greater exposure to EU structures and operations will result in improved integration and functionality when working for and with the EU. It can be concluded from the data that a military officer must not approach the EU as a continuation of other military-related jobs he or she may have held in the past. Instead, what is required is a *willingness to engage* with an open-mind and acknowledge that the EU presents a different challenge than ‘business as normal’ for a military assignment in order to improve understanding and integration within a new role.

So, what does this trend of *willingness to engage* across all cases mean for the NATO-EU interface? First and foremost, that NATO-EU cooperation will only improve with more interpersonal cooperation. Military officers must seek out opportunities to interact with the EU as a professional organization in order to actually spend time within the NATO-EU interface and gain from that experience. A common refrain from military officers about intra-organization cooperation is that each must “stick to its own swim lane”, meaning not to interfere with the other organization’s requirements. This attitude is contrary to a *willingness to engage* and creates an environment of minimal interaction. Instead, officers must be eager to understand NATO and the EU by observing the process from an integrated perspective. This is the very definition of *willingness to engage*. A recurrent concern from the NATO perspective is that the EU represents a rival defense organization competing with NATO for time and resources. The EU is, in fact, a different type of international organization than NATO with different priorities and goals than military officers have dealt with previously in their careers. An officer who navigates the NATO-EU interface must not assume that the same strategies, behavioral norms, and practices apply, but must eagerly seek out the opportunity to better understand the EU.

The second readily apparent trend through the entire data set is the relative significance of *tolerance for ambiguity* to unit commanders. Unit commanders, especially naval commanding officers, are used to a degree of autonomy in their tasking. They are accustomed to being self-reliant when it comes to accomplishing the mission. In 5,000 years of naval warfare, it is only very recently that communication with ships at sea, and between ships at sea, has even become possible. This is the historical foundation of where the independent, autonomous commanding officer derives. The EU represents a comprehensive, civilian-focused approach to security and defense challenges, and the military plays a specialized role among many different levers of power. It is natural, therefore, that military tasking will be narrower in scope than typical military directives from NATO or national entities. The types of missions which the EU undertakes militarily, typically monitoring and security missions, seem less involved to a unit commander who is used to managing the entire spectrum of operations from his or her command. As was explained in Case 2, “When you come to the EU, ...the military’s influence...has got to be played in a completely different way. You cannot just lead from the front on this like you do in NATO.” Therefore, in order to navigate the NATO-EU interface, a unit commander must be more accepting of uncertainty and limited clarity while having the patience to carry-out the type of tasking required by the EU.

So, what does a need for increased *tolerance for ambiguity* mean to a military officer operating in the NATO-EU interface? Primarily, it means accepting less responsibility in overall mission accomplishment. It means patience in accepting less clarity concerning the path and time requirements for mission accomplishment, which is the very definition of a *tolerance for ambiguity*. This approach was strongly represented in each case concerning an operational unit commander. Each also spoke about the need for the EU to more effectively define its tasking and delineate responsibilities in a way that military officers are used to. Drafts of this thesis even included salient recommendations about better structuring EU tasking and providing more explicit detail to unit commanders. However, such an approach demonstrates a low *tolerance for ambiguity*. Asking what the EU can do to ease this burden on unit commanders is not the correct approach to the challenge. The EU should not be responsible for reducing

perceived ambiguity in its civilian-focused capacity-building, nation-building, or security tasking. Instead, military officers must be more tolerant to such limitations within the EU environment. That, after all, is the definition of cross-cultural competence.

Additionally, unit commanders expressed a notable leadership challenge when operating in the EU environment. Most modern militaries encourage a transformational leadership approach amongst its leaders. Transformational leadership involves the leader defining a guiding vision and empowering other team members to strive for that vision, rather than managing execution at every level. Accepting a *tolerance for ambiguity* also challenges the transformational approach to leadership. It is difficult to take initiative or define a clear vision with less structured tasking within EU operations. Unit commanders described it like having their hands tied together representing an inability to step out of their small role under the EU. It is a tall order to expect unit commanders to maintain a transformational approach within the EU environment. The opportunity for initiative is limited within EU missions. A future leadership study should look at the prevalence of transformational leadership at the strategic/operational interface of EU tasking.

The third finding across cases represents the ‘region specific’ training discussed within other 3C and general cross-cultural literature. In the case of the NATO-EU interface, such ‘region specific’ training would consist of a better understanding of the EU’s structure and priorities. It is also found that this training would serve to further enhance development of the two KSAs previously mentioned; *willingness to engage* and *tolerance for ambiguity*. A better understanding of the EU would temper military officers’ expectations of what the EU is capable of, and how it differs in this sense from NATO. Rather than the assumption noted throughout this study that the EU is “weak”, meaning military effectiveness, officers would benefit from understanding of in which areas the EU’s strengths lie. An officer with proficient knowledge of EU structures and comprehensive policy would be more willing to engage the appropriate EU institutions and consider EU foreign policy missions as a whole.

3C studies intentionally downplay the need for language ability in cultural integration. Language in this study, unlike other 3C research, is not a functional barrier to the NATO-EU interface as it might be for an American soldier interacting with a local mayor in Afghanistan. However, EU institutional fluency may substitute for language skill in this scenario. It is important to keep in mind that the general 3C construct has little to do with specialized cultural knowledge about customs and language. So, an improved understanding of how the EU operates should not be the focus of leadership development. The pivotal 3C factor is not simply learning how the EU works, but a more generalized approach to an unknown culture and situation. The *willingness to engage* and *tolerance for ambiguity*, among the other KSAs, are 3C factors which can be applied to any social interaction.

In response to the main research question, no new KSAs were readily apparent as integral factors to navigating the NATO-EU interface. This is good news to the 3C training structures which are already in place in NATO and its member states. Therefore, the 3C construct is concluded to apply to NATO-EU cooperation for military officers. Two potential factors were investigated as possible additional KSAs. During the In-Vivo Coding process, codes for “understanding the EU” and “maturity of the EU” appeared to point to additional requirements worth exploring. It was concluded that the idea of “understanding the EU” better applies to the idea of institutional fluency mentioned above. A common assumption is that if an individual can just speak the local language, then a cross-cultural situation would be easier to handle. If a military officer knew more about the EU, then he or she would better navigate the shift between cultures. However, there are more general interpersonal skills which far outweigh specific regional knowledge in developing competence in a particular culture. A strong *willingness to engage* is the first step which creates opportunities to enhance this “understanding the EU”.

It was similarly concluded that the concept of the “maturity of the EU” points to a number of 3C factors already established. A lack of “maturity of the EU”, meaning less operational experience and established rules and procedures, was often cited across cases as a reason why NATO-EU interactions were complicated. NATO, it was



assumed, simply ran more efficiently based on its historical background as a long-standing military alliance. This thesis, however, was unable to derive a unique KSAA from this concept, but rather sees the idea of “maturity of the EU” as a conglomeration of factors. First, *willingness to engage* creates exposure to the EU and curiosity about its functionality. This approach will serve to limit the naïve assumptions about the EU’s strategy. Second, *cognitive flexibility* is important for adjusting to the EU as an organization by more effectively adapting to the decision-making style and decision-making processes prevalent within the EU. Finally, *ethnocultural empathy* allows an officer to understand the differences between the organizations and consider the limitations within each system. These three factors effectively eliminate the source of the “maturity of the EU” complication rather than representing a KSAA unique to the NATO-EU interface.

Finally, this thesis proposes a slight alteration to the 3C construct proposed by Ross (2010). Specifically, *self-efficacy* should be considered a gateway variable and *tolerance for ambiguity* rather part of the 3C construct. *Self-efficacy* is better represented as a pre-requisite to such pivotal 3C factors as *willingness to engage* and *tolerance for ambiguity*. *Self-efficacy* encompasses the confidence that the individual has the required abilities to succeed. This perspective was exemplified in Case 6 with the statement,

*“As long as I can take my own approach and my own way of doing things, then I am sure that wherever I am going or what I am doing then I have something to contribute. I think it is the most important thing. I can sort out the details of the organization as necessary, but I know that whoever I am working under I can do what I need to do to get the mission accomplished.”*

This skill is necessary in the face of ambiguity and allows for the patience necessary to pursue long-term objectives. *Self-efficacy* also encourages repeated attempts within a *willingness to engage* and serves to keep curiosity alive despite setbacks. Experience in the EU was summarized in Case 2 with, “This last three and half years in the EU, the soul was really drained. It is really hard to grasp. You can’t do it forever. It is just – you lose too many times and get too few wins.” Such a perspective speaks to the importance

of *self-efficacy* in enabling the other 3C factors to work towards better integration. Figure 5 represents the updated model of 3C concluded by this thesis.

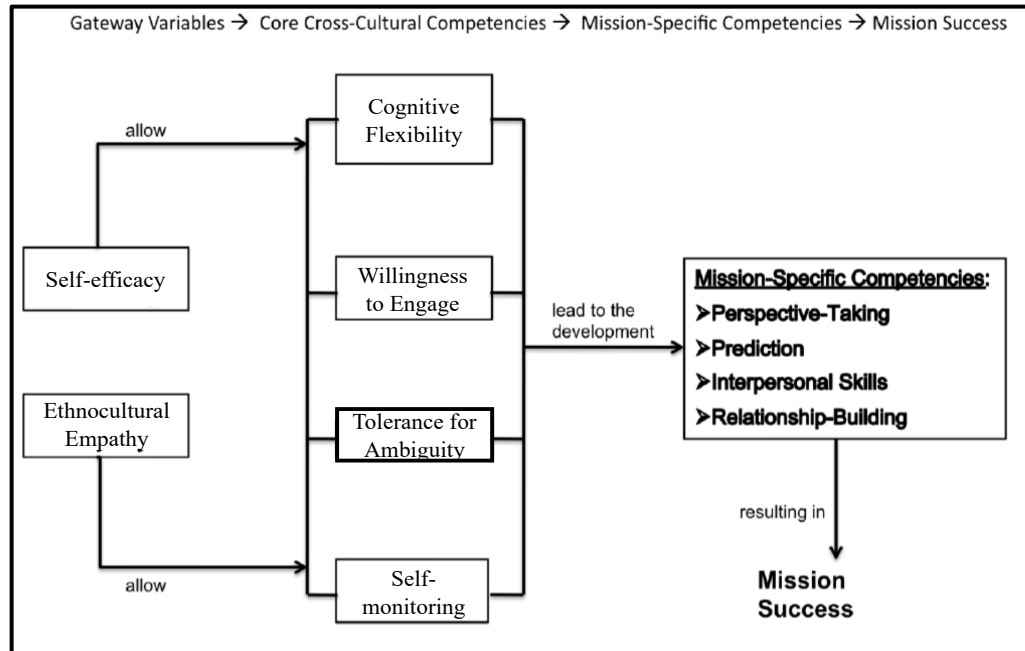


Figure 5. Proposed model of cross-cultural competence. Researcher's variance on Ross (2010).

## **7. Discussion**

The aim of this research was to provide initial indications of whether the 3C construct has applicability to the NATO-EU interface and should be pursued further in order to better develop NATO officers for the leadership challenges associated with NATO-EU interaction. It is concluded that this stream of strategic culture research should be followed in order to further cultivate the interpersonal aspects and leadership challenges within NATO-EU cooperation. The hypothesized KSAs from previous 3C research provided excellent correlation to the nature of challenges and scenarios faced within each of the seven cases covered by this study. The six KSAs are concluded to be general enough to be adopted to this form of cross-cultural interaction and are certainly applicable to coping with the cultural differences in NATO and the EU.

### ***7.1 Implications in strategic culture studies***

This thesis adds depth to strategic culture studies by analyzing the bearers and mediators of strategic culture. There is a fine difference between organizational culture and strategic culture at this level. This thesis provides a unique case study for exploring such a separation. It evaluates the socialization of “elites” who are responsible for interacting with, accumulating, and passing on their institutions’ strategic cultures. Rather than analyzing the strategic culture of security institutions themselves (NATO, the EU, nation states, etc.), this thesis examines strategic culture below the governmental level within the military institutions which provide critical input to how strategic culture takes the form that it does. This depth, below the governmental level in the “internal functionality”, is lacking in main stream strategic culture literature from any perspective (national to supranational, adversarial comparisons, and cooperative comparisons).

On a broader scale, this study also uses strategic culture as a window into EU integration. Jeffrey Checkel (2005, p. 802) described the decades-long plight of scholars of EU integration “to theorize and document how state elites, in insulated settings, may adopt multiple identities and in some cases redefine their interests through processes of

social interaction within EU institutions.” This thesis, then, represents an attempt to show how the difficulties encountered by a group of people attempting to integrate within an EU institution can provide evidence of the process of integration from a constructivist perspective.

### *7.2 Recommendations for improving this research*

Some aspects of this thesis, however, should be improved upon in future research. This thesis is not based on inter-coder reliability or other more stringent methodologies but is intended to investigate the relationship between 3C and NATO-EU relations. A number of comments are worth addressing concerning the reliability and validity of the findings in this thesis. First, the researcher’s task is made more difficult with a language barrier. In this research, interviews were conducted in the language the study would be written in, English. For most cases, this was not a significant issue. Interview subjects with limited English skills, however, presented less monologue and very straight forward answers to the questions asked. The researcher was forced to draw out more comparisons by asking more direct questions and may have influenced the trend in answers received in these cases. It is difficult for an interview subject with weaker language skills to illustrate or elaborate on the leadership challenges encountered or interpersonal strategies employed when adjusting to the EU.

Second, the “first impression of the EU” question, which was intended to substitute for the critical incident narrative found in other 3C studies, was not the best question to serve this purpose. This question was not suited to a majority of interview subjects whose first encounter with the EU or in an EU role was many years ago. These subjects’ later impressions proved more useful and detailed. The aim of a critical incident description is to identify the specific behavioral modifications undertaken, by employing various KSAAs, in order to adjust to the different culture. Future research should attempt to identify critical incidents as high-pressure or time-sensitive scenarios of NATO-EU cooperation or in an EU role. The “first impression” approach would work well in future studies if subjects are identified in their first 100 days on an EU

assignment. The impression of the cultural difference will still be fresh and will likely provide a better perspective than was found in this study.

Third, asking first about NATO experience in the interviews did not produce the effect which was intended by the researcher. It was assumed that a discussion of the interview subject's experiences in NATO would help to draw out better contrast to the EU cultural environment in later interview questions. This approach did not seem to stir any better or more detailed sentiments about adjustment to the EU cultural environment based on its difference from NATO. In some cases, such questions only seemed to confuse the discussion to topics not aligned with the aims of the study or caused mixed memories from interview subjects. With interview subjects more contemporarily involved with the transition to an EU assignment, the difference to NATO line of questioning should play a minimized role.

Fourth, the researcher continuously adjusted how the research topic was introduced prior to beginning the interviews. If the study was introduced primarily as a leadership study, then subjects tended to steer their answers towards their own leadership style. A leadership style, although interesting to investigate, typically consists of leadership literature which the subject has been exposed to and after which he or she attempts to model his or her approach to leadership. A leadership style is a very difficult phenomenon to self-report in an interview setting. Additionally, a style or attitude is not necessarily made up of behavioral components. The focus of this study, with strategic culture as the theoretical framework, was focused on the patterns of behavior required for adjustment to the EU cultural environment. Therefore, interview subjects trying to convey their own leadership style detracted from the quality of the data. It was found that the best introduction of the study, prior to the interviews, was as a study of the military's role in the EU. This tended to inspire more behavioral-focused answers and immediately got the subject thinking about challenges associated with his or her role in the EU.

Finally, it is recommended that future studies employ ethnography as the methodology to focus on cross-cultural interactions across strategic cultures. Self-reporting of abstract

behavioral components is very unreliable. Certain situational based judgements or behaviors demand a more elaborate methodology than semi-structured interviews, which rely on self-reported insight (Ross 2010, p. 11). This deficiency has been noted in a number of previous 3C studies. Ethnography would better allow the researcher to assess the values, norms, and patterns of behavior associated with adjustment to the EU cultural environment. This would likely result in a more elaborate understanding of the interpersonal skills required in such a scenario. However, ethnography in military-focused research can be very complicated. Operational commitments, security clearances, and researcher safety concerns all make military ethnography an especially difficult medium. It is worth noting that not a single DoD 3C study has conducted ethnography in the field, because the cross-cultural interactions worth exploring typically occur in a combat zone. The NATO-EU interface presents a more probable scenario where ethnography could be employed with the right amount of consideration and approval.

### ***7.3 Opportunities for future study***

An additional area for future research involves more specific sub-cases to NATO-EU interaction. Data from this thesis indicates some variance depending on the role examined within each case. It was noted that *tolerance for ambiguity*, for example, was most applicable to unit commanders trying to translate strategic guidance into operational and tactical action. It is worth exploring whether the patterns of 3C demand a different focus on KSAs in order to better adapt to different roles. Do the same findings hold true if the sub-case of only officers working on the EUMS are examined? Only operational officers? The intriguing sub-case for transatlantic cooperation, of course, would be the non-EU NATO officer. Are different sets of skills required for non-EU officer (e.g., American, Canadian, Norwegian, Albanian, etc.) to navigate the NATO-EU interface than for a German? This particular sub-case will take on an interesting dynamic with the UK soon falling into this category.

The ideal future study on this topic, in the opinion of this thesis, would be an ethnographic study consisting of non-participant observation and interviews with senior

military officers in their first 100 days operating within the EU environment. A focus on a particular sub-case would only focus such a study, and likely provide even more actionable items for leadership preparation before such an assignment.

It is also worth considering the impact changes in the EU would have on this thesis. Particular attention should be given to the trend of Europeanization or federalization of the EU. Changing internal conditions which result in deeper European integration, towards a United States of Europe, will have a measurable impact on the social actors responsible for executing the strategic framework of such an organization. Likewise, the creation of an autonomous European Army, recently called for by French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel, would have a similar impact on the cooperation dynamics. Such a change would certainly alter the strategic culture of the organization and will also alter the leadership challenge faced by military officers in NATO-EU cooperation. It could be assumed that the importance for *tolerance for ambiguity* may be decreased with further federalization, as the EU would likely issue more concise and clear strategic visions if it were able to speak with a single unified voice. Regardless, this type of research will never be considered 'complete' as both NATO and the EU continue to develop and the leadership challenges facing those responsible for navigating the NATO-EU interface also varies.

## **8. Conclusion**

This study represents a unique approach to the literature by investigating the applicability of cross-cultural competence modeling to strategic culture research. Strategic culture theory serves to characterize a nation or entity's use of its military forces and is derived from more general cultural theories on national character. Culture theories have a uniquely personal aspect by examining how people come to decisions and regulate their own behaviors. The constructivist approach to strategic culture entails that the culture either shapes, or is shaped by, the behavior of social actors within the community. It is surprising, then, that this thesis represents a small corner of strategic culture literature which looks specifically at interpersonal interactions on the border of two organizational or strategic cultures. This thesis uses the NATO-EU interface as the merger of two potentially different strategic cultures and asks how an individual military leader best adjusts to both environments.

This study is increasingly applicable to today's security environment. Military leaders are consistently asked to be competent in a variety of cross-cultural situations throughout their careers. It is no longer enough in a post-modern military to simply rely on direction from above, but rather every officer must rise to the mantle of leadership by adapting to any unknown scenario – especially in a multinational environment. Leaders are asked to function between multiple organizations, structures, and requirements which requires a broader spectrum of cognitive ability than in the past. As an example of this, NATO-EU cooperation is becoming increasingly applicable and necessary for European security and defense. This requires more frequent crossing of the NATO-EU interface by a larger number of military officers in peace and crisis management scenarios. It is of utmost importance, then, that this study asks how military leaders navigate that interface on a personal level.

This thesis was able to address the research question, and also shed light on some of the more far-reaching implications of this study. In considering the main research question, it is concluded that the NATO-EU interface represents a leadership challenge for military officers responsible for navigating between the two organizations. The



challenge can be characterized as entering a puzzling environment demanding of personal initiative and open-mindedness. The component factors of the 3C model, each of the hypothesized KSAAs, all apply to adaptation within this environment. It was found that a *willingness to engage* was particularly important across all cases, meaning that the EU must not be avoided as an inadequate or unknown labyrinth. A *tolerance for ambiguity* is particularly applicable to unit commanders dealing with operational assignments in the EU. Overall, this thesis has shown that the underlying assumptions of the 3C model can be applied to strategic culture theory. The hypothesized KSAAs in this study can serve as effective operationalization for the patterns of behavior of the socially transmitted, identity-derived norms, ideas and patterns of behavior which comprise strategic culture.

This is encouraging and supportive of the current leadership development paradigm in NATO and its member states which focuses on 3C in leadership training. Particular emphasis should be placed on *willingness to engage* and *tolerance for ambiguity*, and how these skills manifest, in preparation for an assignment to the EU. Based on the applicability of the 3C model to the NATO-EU interface, it does appear that the EU has a different strategic culture from NATO. Cross-cultural skills summarized nearly all of the challenges and frustrations which emerged in each case analyzed. Therefore, this thesis has shown that the same principles of 3C apply to cooperative strategic cultures between allies and partners. Such a finding is encouraging and likely also applies to other strategic or organizational culture partnerships such as EU-UN, the European Commission – European Parliament, and others.

The ultimate take-away from this study is the applicability of 3C in all facets of leadership development. If anything, this thesis serves to underline the importance of cross-cultural abilities when it comes to handling new responsibilities across organizational or national divides. Through seven cases of NATO-EU interaction, with data from seven semi-structured elite interviews, the hypothesized KSAAs of the 3C model were deemed applicable to the leadership challenges faced. This is encouraging because it signifies that NATO's leadership training on 3C, originally derived from

combat-zone interpersonal interactions, is equally applicable to assignments within various multinational organizations, as well.

Future research on this topic should be focused on particular sub-cases of interest, and sub-cases must be prioritized based on the need for improved performance. Sub-cases of non-EU officers taking on a role in NATO requiring close coordination with the EU or of unit commanders operating under the EU flag for the first time are likely the most applicable to leadership development. Additionally, it is recommended that future studies employ an ethnographic approach to the research topic. A number of the situational judgements assessed in this study proved extremely difficult to assess in the self-reporting environment created by interviews alone. This deficit has been noted in other 3C studies, as well, and only highlights the importance of bringing the worlds of academia and practice closer together for mutual benefit.

In the end, this thesis used the very academic framework of strategic culture to investigate the personal intricacies of leadership in a multinational environment. It boiled down a portion of the definition of strategic culture to specific behavioral adjustments necessary for integration across a divide in strategic cultures. It is easy to lose focus on the fact that under the elaborate academic theories and international strategic doctrines are people. People who interact, overcome challenges, and bring the commitments and visions of their organizations to life. Leadership development is a life-long journey and the NATO-EU interface serves as a unique challenge along that path for military officers. Any research which can help frame that responsibility in a tangible, actionable manner, serves to improve collaboration between the two organizations into the future.

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## Appendix A: Interview Matrix

Case number	Experience operating in NATO and EU?	Experience	Date	Location	Length (in words)
01	NATO only EU cooperation	Senior Officer, Special Assistant to SACEUR, NATO Int'l Military Staff	18Feb19	Skype	4,879
02	Both	Flag Officer, Chief of Staff NATO Allied Maritime Command, Deputy Director General of EUMS	19Feb19	Skype	9,210
03	NATO only EU cooperation	Flag Officer, Commander Allied Land Command, Commander of U.S. Army Europe	21Feb19	Skype and Tartu	3,440
04	Both	Senior Officer, Chief of Staff SNMG2, Training liaison <i>Operation Atalanta</i>	21Feb19	Tartu	3,056
05	Both	Senior Officer, Commanding Officer in SNMG2, <i>Operation Sophia</i> flagship commanding officer	26Feb19	Tartu	4,698
06	Both	Senior Officer, Commanding Officer in SNMG2, <i>Operation Atalanta</i> Operational Headquarters	01Mar19	Tartu	6,701
07	Both	Flag Officer, NATO ASG for Policy & Planning, EUMS Chief of Staff	07Mar19	Tartu	5,658

## Appendix B: Interview Consent Form

### CONSENT FORM

“NATO and the EU: Operationalizing strategic culture in an increasingly integrated relationship”  
(Working title)

Dear Sir or Madam:

You are being invited to participate in the research project “NATO and the EU: Operationalizing strategic culture in an increasingly integrated relationship”, carried out by Sean Fitzmaurice, a master’s degree candidate of the University of Tartu’s Johan Skytte Institute of Political Studies. You have been selected to participate in this study because you have experience operating in both the NATO and EU decision-making environments. The information provided in this form is to help you decide whether you would like to take part in this study. If you have any questions, please contact the researcher at seanfitzmaurice@gmail.com or by phone +372 5366 1940. More information about the researcher can be found at the end of this form.

**Aims and implications of the research:** This research will help understand the leadership challenges associated with the increasingly integrated role senior military officers play within both NATO and the EU - often simultaneously. The overall project will focus on the effects that an emerging EU strategic culture has on operational decision-makers. The purpose is two-fold: first, to better understand the leadership challenges facing top military leadership in an environment that blends two different organizations in terms of strategy, policy, limitations, and goals; and second, to provide evidence as to whether the EU in fact does have a distinct strategic culture separate from NATO’s.

**Procedures of the research:** Should you agree to participate, it will take approximately **45 minutes** of your time to be interviewed. During the interview you will be asked to answer questions about your personal experience in both NATO and EU operations. Questions will focus strictly on your personal leadership experience – what are the behavioral differences between the two organizations? Questions about general NATO/EU policy, politics, and strategy will not be discussed. The interview will be audio-recorded to ensure that the researcher has an accurate record of the discussion. Audio recording will be destroyed after the interview has been transcribed. The researcher will ensure protection of personal data and secure processing and storage of the gathered empirical material as outlined below.

**Possible risks and benefits for participants:** This research involves minimal risk to participants. Measures will be taken to protect the confidentiality and privacy of research participants. Interviewees remain anonymous and their responses will not be linked to their identity. Participants are free to withdraw from the project at any time and may skip a question if they feel uncomfortable giving an answer. You are not expected to directly benefit from participating in this research study except for insight you might gain through answering the interview questions. If you are interested in obtaining a summary of research findings, please let the researcher know.

**Anonymity and confidentiality of personal data:** Reasonable steps will be taken to protect your privacy and the confidentiality of your study data. Assigning numbers to

each interviewee will anonymize the data. The subjects' identifiers (name, address, email address, telephone number etc.) will not be maintained in association with the research data, and will only be known to the principal investigator. The only person who will have access to the audio file and the transcription of the interview is the principal investigator from the University of Tartu, and any other person or agency required by law. Confidentiality will also be strictly observed in presentation of findings: the interviewees will remain anonymous and their answers will not directly be tied to their identifiers, thus rendering them unidentifiable. Audio recordings and transcripts will be destroyed after the completion of the analysis. The information from this study may be published and publicly presented, but your identity will be kept confidential. You will remain anonymous and will not be identifiable from the data.

**Rights of research participants:** You can choose not to participate in this study or withdraw your participation at any time during or after the research begins. Refusing to be in this study or deciding to discontinue participation will not affect your relationship with the investigator or the University of Tartu. Should you encounter problems as a direct result of being in this study, please contact the principal investigator listed at the end of this consent form.

**Informed consent:** You are freely deciding whether to participate in this research study. To agree to the interview means that you have read and understood this consent form, you have had your questions answered, and you have decided to be part of the research study.

If you have any questions before or during the study, you should talk to one of the investigators listed below. You will be given a copy of this document for your own records.

**About the researcher:** Sean Fitzmaurice is an active duty Lieutenant in the United States Navy. He is an experienced nuclear submarine officer and was selected for an Olmsted Scholarship in 2016. As an Olmsted Scholar, the language of instruction of his degree, in European Studies from the University of Tartu, is Estonian. His academic interests lie in leadership development, cross-cultural competence, and emotional intelligence. LT Fitzmaurice's ultimate goal is to one day serve as Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (SACEUR).

#### **Study personnel:**

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## **Appendix C: Interview Guide**

### **INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

**“NATO and the EU: Operationalizing strategic culture in an increasingly integrated relationship”  
(Working title)**

#### **I. INTRODUCTION**

At the beginning of each interview, the researcher introduces himself and briefly describes the project background and goals. The researcher distributes the informed consent statement and project description. Also during this introduction, the following critical information is conveyed to participants:

1. Participants are informed about the expected duration, general nature of the interview, and that the researcher is responsible for controlling the flow of interview topics. Participants are guided throughout the interview to provide their own personal narrative accounts as answers to the interview questions rather than brief answers from doctrine or regulations.
2. Participants are reminded that participation is entirely voluntary, and that they can refuse to be interviewed, decline to answer specific questions, or stop the interview at any time at their discretion with no negative repercussions.
3. Participants are told that the project and in particular, the interviews, are conducted at an unclassified level, and will ultimately rely on the participant to not reveal sensitive or classified information. Participants are advised to err on the side of safety when they are uncertain as to the sensitivity or classification of information.
4. Participants are explicitly asked to not reveal names or any other identifying information about any other fellow military members during the course of the interviews. (If such names are revealed they will be removed and identifiers inserted during data preparation.)
5. Participants are asked for permission to audio record the interview. The researcher will explicitly state that the participant can decline this request with no negative repercussions whatsoever, and that they may have the recording stopped at any time during the course of the interview.
6. Participants are then asked if they have any questions prior to beginning the interview.

## II. BACKGROUND/EXPERIENCE

How would you summarize your experience operating with NATO and the EU?

How much exposure have you had to each?

What have you done with each organization?

Have you been responsible for decision-making within each organization?

Do you remember your first impression of working with the EU?

What struck you about the organization?

Has that changed over time?

Which do you prefer to work with, NATO or the EU?

Do you feel comfortable in both environments?

Which is more efficient?

Is one more dedicated to their craft than another?

Is there a such thing as “an EU military officer”?

Who are they?

Are there stereotypes of each organization? Not just for military staff, but civilian staff, and the organization as a whole?

*Both organizations have civil-military relations. In the EU it is the Councils, and frankly the rest of the EU structure. NATO has the political committee of defense ministers and standard civilian policy employees, etc.*

Is the civilian and military relationship different in the EU and NATO?

Who is “working” for who?

How would you describe the EU’s approach to using military force? (In your opinion!)

NATO’s approach?

Looking to find a way to get involved, neutral, or “last ditch effort”?

## II. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Is your job different when you are working on a project or mission with the EU, compared to NATO?

Do you focus your time differently?  
How so?

Is the “product” that you develop for the EU different than you would produce for NATO?

Does the EU, in general, look for different deliverables?  
How would you compare the attention to detail, in general, between the two organizations?

Are there behaviors or ideas which work well in NATO but not in the EU?

Can you provide examples?

What is the most frustrating thing about working with/for the EU?

In which organization is long-term vision more valued?

In which organization is experience more valued?

How does one prove experience in each? Years in service, projects, reputation...

In which organization is diplomacy and cooperation more valued?

In a conflict of interest or disagreement, does the EU bend to NATO or the other way around?

Which side is more understanding of the other?

*Does NATO understand the EU better than the EU understands NATO?*

### III. REQUIRED TRAITS

*Even Admirals have mentors...*

I would like you think of an officer who has significant influence when dealing with both EU and NATO.

What is it that you feel he or she does well?

How does one achieve such influence?

As a young NATO officer, if I were to have my first assignment within the EU structure, what advice would you give me?

Is it important to approach EU and NATO tasks differently?

What do I have to keep in mind for each?

In negotiations or planning, is it better to be quick and direct with the EU or is a diplomatic approach required?

Can I do well in charge of a unit, a ship or battalion, within an EUNAVFOR or EUFOR without really understanding anything about the EU?

How much knowledge of the EU is needed in order to do well?

*Much has been written and debated about the EU developing strategic autonomy from NATO, and therefore developing its own strategic culture – or the way in which the EU views the use of its armed forces...*

Do you feel the culture in the EU, today, **is** different from the culture in NATO?

Or is there so much spill-over between the two staffs that their cultures - the way of going about their business - are relatively the same?

## Appendix D: Code Book

Category	Code	Definition	Example
Self-efficacy	Self-efficacy	belief in one's own abilities to attain certain goals. Other indications of confidence	<i>"If you like challenges, then you will enjoy the EU. If you like challenges and your own approach is to see things and learn different things and change things for the better, then you will do well in the EU."</i> (Case 6)
	Commitment	the drive to see a task to completion despite setbacks and challenges	<i>"...developing a momentum and direction to keep enough people clinging to, and believing in long enough, to achieve the effect you believe should be achieved."</i> (Case 2)
	Perseverance	the persistent pursuit of goals and objectives and ability to keep focused on them	<i>"This last three and half years in the EU, the soul was really drained. It is really hard to grasp. You can't do it forever. It is just – you lose too many times and get too few wins. When the wins come along, they are great news."</i> (Case 2)
Ethnocultural Empathy	Ethnocultural empathy	to detect, consider, and analyze others' views as well as their self-perception, behavior, and perception of others	<i>"Acknowledging and respecting their role to try to do everything to achieve good results together. At least that meant coordination, at least transparency, knowing what each other was doing and taking it into account for our own work."</i> (Case 7)
	Consideration for the "other"	acknowledgement of the other culture (the EU) as a different cultural entity. Allowing for the deliberate consideration of the sensitivity and tradition of the "other side".	<i>"Even though I thought I was a pretty sophisticated American who understood Europe, and based on everything I just told you, I was a little slow to realize some other things that I could have and should have been doing. And all my European friends, when I was talking to them, half of their brain is thinking EU and half of their brain is thinking NATO."</i> (Case 3)
	Perspective-taking	the ability to see events as another person sees them. Signified by overcoming stereotypes or prejudices	<i>"The EUMS does not have the staff in it to do peer to peer competition planning, and none of their operational staffs can do it either. I've been to a number</i>



		<p>* the quote in the next column is an excellent example of an “Opposite” code turned to KSAA. The segment was initially coded “Opposite” for the researcher to further assess what KSAA would alleviate this frustration. It was not concluded that the EU is “weak” or “too small to be effective”, which was the tone of this portion of the data. Rather, the interview subject required “perspective-taking” to realize that the EU has certain limitations and priorities, which means its goals and strategy are different from what he is used to with NATO. The EU is not focused on peer to peer competition, and that perspective must be better understood.</p>	<p><i>of them, and they are tiny little things. A 100-man staff. There’s not much you can do with that.” (Case 1) †</i></p>
<b>Willingness to Engage</b>	Willingness to engage	the ability to make sense of unfamiliar social situations in dissimilar cultures by involving oneself in the process	<p><i>“EUMS was all about getting out and about in different people’s offices. In different organization’s offices’. With different mentalities. You could be talking to an EU Humanitarian Aid guy one day. A financier the next day. Someone who does bank accounts the next. You name it. There were all kinds of activity because one of the problems that we had for CSDP to work, was that it demanded consensus.” (Case 2)</i></p>
	Open-minded interest	an attempt to eliminate assumptions while embracing a curiosity about what opportunities may exist in the other culture. A generally positive outlook by viewing cultural difference as an intriguing challenge.	<p><i>“I am never satisfied with something that is given. I understand it is given. But now, through my critical thinking, I need to challenge that somehow to determine if it is the right thing or if it can be improved.” (Case 6)</i></p>
	Engagement	direct involvement in the different processes within the other culture. Rather than holding back, this skill involves actual interaction with the unknown	<p><i>“We’ve had a devil job to get our best people into NATO, let alone the EU. Because it is much more important to fight through the corridors of power in Whitehall than it is to go deal with jolly foreigners in foreign parts. It couldn’t be more untrue if you tried, but that’s an attitude of minds which is</i></p>

			<i>not yet dead. And it is one of those things that will be a very hard lesson.” (Case 2)</i>
<b>Cognitive Flexibility</b>	Cognitive flexibility	the ability to comprehend the facts to understand different roles and approaches to different situations. Maintaining an increasingly broad arsenal of mental models to draw from.	<i>“You come from a pedigree which tells you that to achieve X, you have to do A and B. And it always works. Then, suddenly, you come along and someone is achieving X by doing P and Q. How can that be possible? My boss has already taught me that to get X, you do A and B. It’s the way to do it. And we realize that we are not profound to all knowledge. We are not as great as we might think we are, the trouble is not all of us are there.” (Case 2)</i>
	Adaptability	willing and able to adjust to changing demands and objectives; not stuck to one single path or train of thought, but rather applies different mental models for each situation	<i>“I think most guys quickly, professional officers, men and women, quickly figure out OK this is not a bad thing. It is just the way it is. When you go to Afghanistan you have to deal with people who are Dari or Pashtun. Wherever you go. That’s why all of our services claim and strive to produce leaders that are adaptive. And coming to Europe is no different. You have to be adaptive to understand it.” (Case 3)</i>
<b>Self-monitoring</b>	Self-monitoring	the ability to modify behavior to comply with or demonstrate respect for others’ values or customs. Picks up on necessary social cues and adjusts message/tasking as necessary	<i>“[The EU] does not always appreciate military logic or operational risks and imperatives. The fact that we are screaming bloody murder and saying we are all going to die doesn’t necessarily wash up with many people. You have to ply this in a different way.” (Case 2)</i>
	Tact and respect	specific adjustment to social cues in a manner congruent with cultural expectations; communicating as equals which includes building trust across cultural boundaries	<i>“...and ensure that we had cordial, open discussions. I stressed much importance to stressing trustful, collegiate relationships with our counterparts in other divisions and in the EU. Acknowledging and respecting their role to try to do everything to achieve</i>

			<i>good results together.” (Case 7)</i>
	Amiability	having a friendly or pleasant manner in social interactions in order to alleviate tension or not appear confrontational	<i>“We are used to being very operational. To be concrete, to see results, and to aim for more results. While the EU you must be more diplomatic. More passionate, really. More friendly.” (Case 5)</i>
<b>Tolerance for Ambiguity</b>	Tolerance for ambiguity	open-mindedness in the face of confusion or uncertainty rather than a need for immediate closure or resolution	<i>“But when we decide something, we must follow it. That is the problem. In the European Union, when you have different interests maybe we begin with one task but after comes deviation. This is a problem. I prefer working under NATO because it was crystal clear, the task.” (Case 4) †</i>
	Structure	desire for cognitive closure and predictable outcomes; actually represents the inverse of tolerance for ambiguity. Most often associated with a low tolerance for ambiguity	<i>“To deal with military and civilian at the same time when I sort out who is giving me direction and when. That is uncomfortable as an officer working for the EU.” (Case 5) †</i>
	Patience	the ability to withstand long-term results in the face of uncertainty or confusion, especially when it is assumed such results could be achieved faster in one’s home culture (NATO).	<i>“But to achieve that effect took us seven months. And that is one of the biggest problems with the EU is that it takes much, much, much, longer to achieve an effect and to initiate an effect than it does with NATO. But the chances are that you will have more of an enduring effect because you have all of these levers of power engaged in the end of it.” (Case 2)</i>
<b>Opposite</b>	Opposite	This code was used to denote a challenge where the wording of the data was negative in context. These coded segments required the interpretive analysis of the researcher to further assess how to alleviate the challenge, and then to determine which KSAA code applied to the scenario.  * For another example, see the “perspective-taking” code. And other examples marked with the † symbol	<i>“I was astounded, I was very naïve. I assumed because almost every country in which we were operating from Estonia down to Bulgaria, Poland, Romania, all of them, and of course Germany, then we should be able to move very quickly. They were all NATO. All EU.” (Case 3)</i> Later credited to “open-minded interest” code because of operating on

			unfounded assumptions led to the frustration/difficulty.
<b>In-Vivo coding</b>	“understand the EU”	<p>This In-Vivo code was a common theme across cases and was investigated as a potential unique KSAA. Segments of data received this code when subjects spoke about the complexity of the EU system and trying to understand where and how the military was utilized by the EU.</p> <p>After several iterations, these segments took on the code “willingness to engage” due to its congruence with developing institutional fluency.</p>	<p><i>“The EU is very difficult to understand. As an organization NATO is quite clear. We are the military component of a very clear organization. The EU is quite more complex to understand. I had a lot of difficulties.” (Case 5)</i></p> <p><i>“That is something which a military officer needs to recognize and understand is that the focus in the EU when it comes to supporting partners and other nations, primarily in Africa but also the Balkans, is primarily a civilian or political responsibility. The military element is rather a supporting element, relatively small, but very important. Just part of a bigger comprehensive civilian-civilian-civilian-military approach.” (Case 7)</i></p>
	“maturity of the EU”	<p>This In-Vivo code was a common theme across cases and was investigated as a potential unique KSAA. Segments of data received this code when subjects spoke about NATO as the more established military organization. The assumption was that the EU just needed more experience employing its military component in order to “catch up” to NATO.</p> <p>After several iterations, these various segments took on the codes of:</p> <p>“willingness to engage” for its exposure to the EU and curiosity about its functionality.</p> <p>“cognitive flexibility” for adjusting to the EU as an organization by more effectively adapting to the decision-making style and</p>	<p><i>“So, even though we operate both organizations by the same people, the structures, coordination, and relationships are all at different stages. Let’s say that. They are in different stages. Until you get to maturity like NATO, it will probably face more challenges than NATO operations.” (Case 6)</i></p>

		decision-making processes prevalent within the EU.  “ethnocultural empathy” for allowing an individual to understand the differences between the organizations and consider the limitations within each system.	
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# NAVIGEERIMINE NATO ja EUROOPA LIIDU TELJEL: STRATEEGILISE KULTUURI RAKENDAMINE ÜHA ENAM LÄBIPÕIMUNUD SUHETES.

Sean Joseph Fitzmaurice

## Resümee

Magistritöö käsitleb NATO ja EL telge, organisatsioonide omavahelist koostööd ja selle juhtimist. Töös analüüsiti poolstruktureeritud intervjuusid kõrgemate sõjaväelastega, kes on teinud koostööd nende kahe julgeolekuasutuse vahel, ning püüti leida väärtuslikke õppetunde ja parimaid praktikaid, mida noorematele NATO ohvitseridele edasi anda, kes esimest korda EL ülesannetega kokku puutuvad. Uuringu lähtekohaks oli alljärgnev uurimusküsimus: „Millised oskused on vajalikud erineva strateegilise kultuuriga kohanemiseks?” Uurimistööst järeldus, et *cross-cultural competence (3C)*, ehk kultuuridevahelise pädevuse tegurid on sobilikud üksikute sõjaliste juhtide jaoks, et kohaneda EL julgeolekukeskkonnaga.

NATO ja EL telje erinevusi on uuritud paljude raamistike kaudu. Strateegilise kultuuri kontseptsioon on kõige sobivam, kuna seda kasutatakse selleks, et kirjeldada strateegiliste otsuste tegemist ja käitumist, mida võib organisatsioonis toimivatelt inimestelt eeldada. Käesolevas töös on strateegiline kultuur määratletud sotsiaalselt edastatud, identiteedist tuletatud normide, ideede ja käitumismustrite kogumina, mis toimivad julgeolekuühenduste töötajate ja sotsiaalsete rühmade vahel ning aitavad saavutada julgeoleku ja kaitse eesmärke. Uude strateegilisse kultuuri sisenemine toob kaasa juhtimisprobleeme neile, kelle ülesandeks on tegutseda kahes erinevas organisatsioonis, sageli samaaegselt. Akadeemiline kirjandus keskendub pigem julgeolekuasutuste strateegilise kultuuri määratlemisele. Valdavalt uurivad küsimused, *kuidas* arendatakse strateegilist kultuuri või *kust* tuletatakse strateegiline kultuur. Selle asemel vaadeldakse käesolevas töös strateegilise kultuuri rolli organisatsioonides tegutsevate sotsiaalsete osalejate otsuste ja hoiakute kujundamisel.

Töö kujutab endast ainulaadset lähenemist kirjandusele, sest uurib kultuuridevahelise pädevuse modelleerimise rakendatavust strateegilistele kultuuriuuringutele. Strateegilise

kultuuri teooria iseloomustab riigi või üksuse sõjaliste jõudude kasutamist ja on saadud üldisematest kultuuriteooriatest. Kultuuriteooriatel on ainulaadne isiklik aspekt, uurides, kuidas inimesed otsustavad ja reguleerivad oma käitumist. Strateegilisele kultuurile suunatud konstruktivistlik lähenemine eeldab, et kultuur on kujundatud või kujundab ühiskonna sotsiaalsete osalejate käitumist. Seega on uudne selle magistr töö vaatnurk: töö vaatleb väikest osa strateegilise kultuuri kirjandusest, mis käsitleb konkreetselt interpersonaalset suhtlemist kahe organisatsioonilise või strateegilise kultuuri piiril. See töö kasutab NATO-EL suhet kahe potentsiaalselt erineva strateegilise kultuuri ühendamisel ja küsib, kuidas sõjaväeliider saaks kõige paremini kohaneda mõlema keskkonnaga?

Kohanemine kultuurilise erinevusega ei ole sõjaväes uus mõiste. Uue kultuuriga kohanemise uurimiseks on selle töö kõige sobivam raamistik *cross-cultural competence* (3C). 3C on töös määratletud kui teadmiste, oskuste ja motivatsiooni kogum, mis võimaldab inimestel kultuuridevahelises keskkonnas tõhusalt kohaneda (*the set of knowledge, skills, and affect/motivation that enable individuals to adapt effectively in cross-cultural environments*). 3C mudel hõlmab teadmisi, oskusi, hoiakuid ja võimeid (*knowledge, skills, attitudes, and abilities* ehk KSAA), mis paremini valmistavad kedagi ette kultuuridevaheliseks kommunikatsiooniks. NATO kasutab kõrgemate juhtide koolitusprogrammides 3C mudelit ja soovib seda kasutada ka rahvusvahelises koostöös.

Selles uuringus lähtuti nii induktiivsest kui ka deduktiivsest meetodist. Deduktiivne lähenemine kaeti sõjalise spetsiifilise 3C kirjanduse ülevaate abil. Varasematest uuringutest loodi kuuest KSAA-st nimekiri, mida testiti intervjuude vältel. Need tegurid olid enesetõhusus (*self-efficacy*), etnokultuuriline empaatia (*ethnocultural empathy*), valmisolek osaleda (*willingness to engage*), kognitiivne paindlikkus (*cognitive flexibility*), enesekontroll (*self-monitoring*) ja toimetulek ettemääramatusega (*tolerance for ambiguity*). Eeldati, et need kuus 3C tegurit aitavad mõista või lahendada raskusi ja väljakutseid, millega seisavad silmitsi EL organisatsioonikultuuriga kohanevad sõjaväeliidrid. Ning seda eeldusel, et EL on tegelikult eraldi strateegiline kultuur. Uuringu induktiivne osa koosnes intervjuuandmete täiendavast analüüsist, millest sooviti leida

võimalikke täiendusi või alternatiivseid KSAA-sid, mis võiksid paremini sobida NATO-EL teljel.

Intervjuud toimusid seitsme sõjaväeliidriga, kellel kõigil oli nii NATO kui ka EL kogemus. Need olid EL sõjalise staabi endine asepeadirektor, NATO abipeasekretär, ja ohvitserid, kes juhtisid laevu EUNAVFOR MED *Sophias* ja operatsioon *Atalantas* ning teised. Iga intervjuueeritav kirjeldas oma kogemusi oma rolliga kohanemisel ELis, andes märku pettumustest, kummalistest kogemustest ja väljakutsetest.

Seejärel viis uurija läbi tõlgendusanalüüsi, et paremini mõista iga liidri ees seisvaid väljakutseid. Igal üksikjuhul analüüsiti iga andmekogumit enne omaette ning tehti seejärel juhtumite ristanalüüs. Uurija hindas iga intervjuueeritava kogemuste käitumuslikke aspekte. Kuigi väljendatud arvamust peeti iga intervjuu jaoks asjakohaseks, siis juhul kui esitatud küsimus lõi peegeldumise võimaluse, keskendus uurija tõlgenduslik analüüs pigem kogemuse käitumuslikule kirjeldusele. Narratiiv andis parema võimaluse hinnata, kuidas iga teema oma sotsiaalsete mõjutuste tõttu kohandas. Iga juhtumi kirjelduse kaudu selgus, kuidas iga kuue hüpoteesis välja pakutud KSAA-l oli oluline roll EL keskkonnaga kohanemisel. Juhtumi kirjeldused on olulised, et saada aru kuidas igal erineval juhul väljakutsed tekkisid, ning kuidas uurija määras neile õige kategooria.

Juhtumite ristanalüüsi peamised järeldused hõlmasid konkreetselt *valmisolekut osaleda* ja *tolerantsust ebamäärasusega*. Leiti, et *valmisolek osaleda* oli eriti oluline kõikidel juhtudel, mis tähendab, et EL struktuure ja koostööformaate ei tohi vältida nende ebapiisava tundmise tõttu. See konkreetne tegur oli iga juhtumi puhul kergesti levinud ja tähistas kõige järjepidevamat suundumust kõigil juhtudel. Andmetest võib järeldada, et sõjaväeohvitser ei tohi läheneda EL koostööformaatile selle mõtteviisiga, et ta saab jätkata seal samamoodi nagu teistel sõjalistel töökohtadel, mida ta on varem täitnud. Selle asemel on vaja *valmisolekut osaleda* avatult ja selleks, et parandada uue rolli mõistmist ja sellega kohanemist, tunnistada, et EL esitab (aõjalise ülesande täitmiseks) varasemast erineva väljakutse. Ohvitser NATO-EL teljel ei tohi eeldada, et kehtivad samad



strateegiad, käitumisnormid ja -praktikad, ning nad peavad innukamalt otsima võimalust paremini mõista EL kultuuri.

Lisaks leiti, et *tolerantsus ebamäärasusega* on eriti rakendatav liidritele, kes tegelevad operatiivülesannetega EL tasandil. Kõrged sõjaväelased, eriti mereväekaptenid, on oma ülesannete täitmisel harjunud teatava autonoomiaga. Nad on harjunud olema missioonile jõudmisel enesekindlad. Missioonide liigid, mida EL sõjalises domeenis, tavaliselt seire- ja julgeolekülesannetega seoses täidab, tunduvad arusaamatud üksuse juhatajale, kes on harjunud juhtima kogu operatsiooni. Seetõttu peab NATO-EL teljel navigeerimiseks olema üksuse ülem valmis orienteeruma ebaselges keskkonnas, olles samal ajal kannatlik, selleks, et viia läbi EL nõutav ülesanne. Väljakutseid ei saa lahendada EL poolt üksuste liidrite koormuse leevendamise abil selles vallas. Teisisõnu, EL ei peaks olema vastutav tajutava ebamäärasuse vähendamise eest, sest nende ülesanded hõlmavadki teist tüüpi ülesandeid: tsiviilse suutlikkuse suurendamist, riigi ülesehitamist või julgeolekülesannete täitmist. Selle asemel peavad sõjaväehvitserid õppima sellises EL keskkonnas tolerantsemalt toime tulema. Lõppude lõpuks on see kultuuridevahelise pädevuse määratlus.

Seejärel jõuti järeldusele, et NATO-EL telg kujutab endast kõrgematele sõjaväelastele kultuuride ja strateegilise kultuuride vahelise navigeerimise väljakutset. Seda väljakutset võib iseloomustada nii, et juht siseneb ebamäärasesse keskkonda, mis nõuab isiklikku initsiatiivi ja avatust. See magistritöö näitas, et 3C mudeli aluseks olevaid eeldusi saab üldjoontes rakendada strateegilise kultuuri teoorias. Selle uuringu hüpoteesidena püstitatud KSAA-d võivad olla efektiivne rakendusviis strateegilist kultuuri hõlmavate, sotsiaalselt edastatud, identiteedist tuletatud normide, ideede ja käitumismustrite jaoks.

See järeldus toetab praegust juhtimise arendamise õppekava NATOs ja selle liikmesriikides, mis keskendub 3C-le juhtimiskoolituses. Erilist rõhku tuleks panna *valmisolekule osaleda ja tolerantsusele ebamäärasusega* ning sellele, kuidas neid oskusi rakendada sõjaväelaste ettevalmistamisel koostööks EL organisatsioonis. Tuginedes 3C mudeli rakendatavusele NATO-EL teljel, saab öelda, et EL omab NATOst erinevat strateegilist kultuuri. Peaaegu kõik analüüsitud väljakutsed ja pettumused on taandatavad

kultuuridevahelise kommunikatsiooni oskustele. Seetõttu on see magistritöö näidanud, et samad 3C põhimõtted kehtivad strateegiate suhtes, mis puudutavad liitlaste ja partnerite vahelist koostööd. Selline järeldus on julgustav ja tõenäoliselt kehtib ka teiste strateegiliste või organisatsiooniliste kultuuride partnerluste kohta, nagu EL-ÜRO, Euroopa Komisjon-Euroopa Parlament, vms.

Selle uuringu kokkuvõtlik õppetund on: 3C on rakendatav juhtimise arendamise kõigis aspektides. Töö eesmärk oli rõhutada kultuuridevahelise kommunikatsiooni oskuste tähtsust uute ülesannete käsitlemisel neis organisatsioonides riikidevahelistes tööloikudes. Töös testiti lähtehüpooteesi, milleks oli: kas 3C mudeli KSAA-sid saaks kohaldada juhtimisprobleemidele kahe organisatsiooni vahel ning testisime seda seitsme poolstruktureeritud eliitintervjuu põhjal NATO-EL teljel. See tähendab, et 3C NATO juhtkoolitus, mis põhineb algselt võitlusvõõndi inimsuhete interaktsioonidel, on võrdselt kohaldatav ka rahvusvahelistes organisatsioonides.

Teema tulevased uuringud peaksid keskenduma konkreetsetele uurimisprobleemidele ja alamjuhtumitele, lähtudes vajadust saavutada nende organisatsioonide vahel paremat tulemuslikkust. Kõige olulisemad osalised organisatsioonidevahelises koostöös on need NATO ohvitserid, kes teevad tihedat koostööd ELiga, või esimest korda EL lipu all tegutsevad üksuse juhid. Lisaks on soovitatav, et tulevased uuringud kasutaksid uurimisteamale etnograafilist lähenemist. Mitmeid käesolevas uuringus analüüsitud otsuseid, mis intervjuude eneseanalüüsist välja tulid, oli väga raske hinnata. Seda puudujääki on täheldatud ka teistes 3C uuringutes, ning toonitab ainult seda, kui oluline on akadeemiliste ringkondade ja praktika lähendamise vastastikuse kasu maksimeerimiseks.

Lõppkokkuvõttes kasutas magistritöö strateegilise kultuuri akadeemilist raamistikku, et uurida juhtimise isiklike keerukusi rahvusvahelises keskkonnas. See pani välja osa strateegilise kultuuri määratlusest konkreetsete käitumuslike kohandustega, mis on vajalikud strateegilise kultuuri lõhe ületamiseks. Tulemuseks olid teatud soovitud ohvitseride valmisoleku parandamiseks NATO-ELi liidese kohta, täpsemalt, et NATO ja EL esindavad erinevaid väljakutseid ja erinevaid kultuurikeskkondi. Lihtne on kaotada

keskendumine asjaolule, et välja töötatud akadeemiliste teooriate ja rahvusvaheliste strateegiliste doktriinide all on inimesed. Inimesed, kes suhtlevad, ületavad väljakutseid ja viivad ellu oma organisatsioonide kohustused ja visioonid. See magistritöö kinnitas edukalt inimsuhete, kultuuriuuringute rakendatavust suuremale akadeemilisele kontseptsioonile rahvusvaheliste suhete valdkonnas. Juhtimise arendamine on elukestev teekond ja NATO-ELi liides on ainulaadne väljakutse sõjaväelaste jaoks. Mis tahes magistritöö, mis aitab kaasa selle vastutustundlikule ja tegutsemisvõimelisele kujundamisele, aitab parandada kahe institutsiooni vahelist koostööd tulevikus.

**Märksõnad:** Strategic culture, cross-cultural competence, NATO-EU security cooperation, EU strategic culture, multinational leadership development, semi-structured elite interview

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**20/05/2019**