

WORKSHOP 24

24. Theorising NATO

Directors:

Mark Webber (*University of Loughborough*)

Tel: +44 1509 222996, +44 116 2214367; **Fax:** +44 1509 223917

Email: m.a.webber@lboro.ac.uk

Adrian Hyde-Price (*University of Bath*)

Tel: +44 1225 383 50; **Email:** a.g.v.hyde-price@bath.ac.uk

NATO is commonly held to be a central institution of European security governance and the principal institution connecting Europe and North America. Despite this status, NATO has within Europe been subject to scholarly neglect and remains under-theorised in European scholarship. New approaches to security such as Critical Security Studies and the 'Copenhagen School' have not considered the Alliance in any depth, and while some work has occurred in a Social Constructivist vein, it has tended to focus on a single aspect of NATO, namely enlargement. The majority of NATO studies tend to be empirical, policy-oriented, and do not make a major theoretical claim. Those that are theoretically-inclined are often influenced by mainstream American liberal institutionalist and neo-realist interpretations with attendant limitations: a rationalist, positivist methodology and a 'problem-solving' approach to theory. These deficiencies leave untouched by theoretical investigation important aspects of NATO – inter-governmental bargaining, leadership, networks, two-level games and the power of bureaucracy to name but a few. Further, there tends to be a focus on practical issues – 'what is NATO for' rather than conceptual ones 'What is NATO?'. The workshop has two purposes: to push forward the theoretically-informed scholarship on the Alliance and to encourage the development of a European network of NATO scholars. It is open to papers which: attempt to conceptualise NATO, apply theoretical propositions to case-study examples of NATO activity and/or specific NATO institutions, explore the relevance of theoretical frameworks (such as Critical Security Studies, historical institutionalism etc.) presently underdeveloped in analysis of the Alliance, and subject NATO to comparative theoretical enquiry (for instance, by reference to scholarship on the EU).