

8-2014

# Unpacking Coalitions: Explaining International Commitment in European Governments

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## ABSTRACT

A central debate in the Comparative Foreign Policy literature concerns the role of government composition on the international behavior of parliamentary democracies. For the past two decades, a multitude of studies have discussed whether single-party governments were more or less constrained than multiparty coalitions in their international behavior, yet they have failed to reach conclusive empirical findings. This dissertation responds to this puzzle by unpacking coalitions: as it captures the variation among coalition governments along mathematical and ideological dimensions, the dissertation introduces a nuanced 'government composition' approach to explain the international commitments of European parliamentary regimes during the post-Cold War period.

To undertake this project, the dissertation utilizes the Comparative Politics literature on coalition theories, legislative politics and economic voting. Specifically, it introduces the veto players and clarity of government responsibility theories to frame the debate and to demonstrate that both theories remain inadequate in explaining commitment intensity unless two key variables are accounted for: (a) the types of multiparty governments that emerge in parliamentary systems and (b) the extent of ideological differences inside these coalitions, or their 'policy incongruence.' Furthermore, the dissertation challenges the existing understanding regarding the constrained nature of minority coalitions by bringing in the policy viability and fragmented opposition explanations into the analysis of foreign policy behavior.

The dissertation employs a multi-method research strategy to comprehensively evaluate the analytical capacity of the 'government composition' explanation by (a) revealing the statistical relationships between government composition and international commitments, (b)

uncovering the mechanisms that link the composition of governments to international commitments, and (c) testing the explanatory power of the 'government composition' approach against a series of alternative explanations at the individual, domestic and international levels.

To these ends, the dissertation first utilizes a post-Cold War foreign policy events dataset to test the effects of government type and ideological cohesion by using multilevel regression techniques. Next, it complements these analyses with structured-focused case studies of the Danish decisions to join the 1990 Gulf and 2003 Iraq wars and the Dutch decision to support the 2003 Iraq war. The case studies evaluate a series of alternative explanations including public opinion, logrolling dynamics among political parties, threats to national survival and the role of political leadership as well as the domestic and international political contexts of these states to explain how they have decided to provide political and material support for these international military operations.

The project firmly concludes that the dichotomous understanding of government composition that has long prevailed in the foreign policy literature is not only inadequate but misleading to explain the international commitments of parliamentary democracies. Quantitative and qualitative tests suggest that the type of multiparty governments and their ideological diversity together affect commitment intensity in different directions, through diverse mechanisms. Specifically, oversized coalitions engage in more intense commitments compared to single-party majority governments through responsibility diffusion. Minority coalitions engage in stronger commitments so long as their ideological setup leaves the parliamentary opposition fragmented, through policy viability. Finally, minimum winning coalitions can overcome their ideological fragility and increase their international commitments when the political parties engage in logrolling relationships with each other. The dissertation situates these

findings within the context of factors that pertain to the motivations of key political leaders, domestic political norms and public opinion, as well as the broader historical foreign policy orientations of the states.

With the conclusions of the statistical and case analyses, the dissertation ultimately offers a ‘coalition politics framework’ to explain foreign policy behavior in parliamentary regimes. In the end, the dissertation contributes to the literature on foreign policy analysis as the first study to introduce a multilevel, multicausal framework to evaluate the international behavior of parliamentary democracies.

UNPACKING COALITIONS: EXPLAINING INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENT IN  
EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS

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DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science  
in the Graduate School of Syracuse University

August 2014

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Though only my name is on its cover page, this dissertation would not have been possible without the contributions of a great many people. My foremost and sincere thanks go to my advisor and mentor, Margaret Hermann. She has been nothing but a source of inspiration, wisdom and generosity throughout my graduate career. She was always there to provide advice and helped me steer the project in the right directions when I seemed to lose my way. Her extraordinary scholarship and personality continues to be my guiding light.

I was extremely fortunate to pursue this research with the best dissertation committee one could hope for. Miriam Elman's comments and expertise always encouraged me to think about the 'big picture' implications of my work. She also gave me invaluable advice that helped me navigate the profession, and she was there to celebrate when I succeeded. Words are not enough to express my gratitude to Seth Jolly. Not only did he provide an incalculable amount of feedback on the project, but he believed in me, made me a better writer and a researcher. Jonathan Hanson's stimulating suggestions encouraged me to excel my methodological skills and advanced the empirical rigor of the project to the next level. I am grateful to Stuart Thorson for asking me the sharp and pertinent questions when I was getting ready to disseminate my findings to broader audiences. This dissertation would not have the quality it has now without the continuous feedback and support of these great scholars at every single step of the process.

Other teachers also provided guidance and mentorship along the way. Special thanks to Matthew Cleary and Brian Taylor for teaching me how to think and write like a political scientist, how to respond to critiques, and how to always challenge myself to do better. Keith Bybee and Kristi Andersen taught me how to transform my research interests into research

projects. Gavan Duffy taught me that a smile is always appreciated in academia. I thank them for their support throughout my years of graduate school.

My heartfelt thanks go to our wonderful administrative staff at Syracuse University for providing the best working environment. I will forever remember the kindness, efficiency and support of Candy Brooks, Jacquelyn Meyer, Sally Greenfield and Tess Slater at the Department of Political Science, and Sallie Guyder at the Moynihan Institute.

This dissertation also received the generous financial and academic support of several institutions. I am grateful to Syracuse University's Department of Political Science for being such a welcoming intellectual home. They awarded me the Dissertation Writing Fellowship, which allowed me to focus solely on my writing for an academic year. The European Union Center of Excellence at the University of Colorado-Boulder provided an excellent venue to exchange ideas: Clifford Carrubba, James Caporaso and Joseph Jupille gave invaluable feedback during the earlier stages of the project. Finally, I am indebted to Northwestern University's Buffett Center for International and Comparative Studies for offering an intellectual abode away from Syracuse: I thank Hendrik Spruyt and Jonathan Caverley for their thought-provoking feedback on the previous drafts; Rita Koryan and Kelly Coffey for being such generous and helpful administrators.

This dissertation is the culmination of my graduate experience, and this journey would not have been the same without my brilliant friends and colleagues at Syracuse. The amazing Paloma Raggo, Emy Matesan and Deepa Prakash: you always supported me professionally and personally. Together we celebrated the good days and learned how to muddle through the bad ones. You know how much you mean to me, and I am truly grateful to have you in my life. Asli Ilgit, Charles Tuthill, Dean Snyder, Eric Rittinger, Esra Ekinici, Franziska Boehme, Hanneke



Derksen, Massimo Ramaioli, Michael Beckstrand, Michael Makara, Kilic Kanat, Ronit Berger, Sean Miskell and Sinan Chu: not only did you help me improve my work on several occasions over the years, but more importantly, you opened your homes to me, joined me in life's celebrations, consoled me when times were rough, and never failed to provide the cheer and humor that we all needed to survive. I thank each and every one of you for making graduate school a fantastic experience from start to finish.

Finally, my greatest and deepest thanks go to my family. My sister, Nevra, taught me how to be strong despite the hardships of life. My amazing husband and my best friend, Hakan Karagul, tirelessly cheered for me at every stage of the dissertation process, even when I doubted myself. His sharp intellect, love and humor inspire me every day to be a better scholar and a person. But none of this would have ever come true if it were not for the infinite generosity, love and support of my parents. They taught me the importance of perseverance—the key to complete a dissertation. My father always advised me to maintain my focus, even when I was struck with the news of his cancer diagnosis during the final stages of writing. I learned from my mother how to always be strong, kind and caring, no matter what life might bring. Whatever I am is due to them, and to them I dedicate this book.

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## CHAPTER 1

### MORE THAN A DICHOTOMY:

#### GOVERNMENT COMPOSITION IN THE STUDY OF FOREIGN POLICY BEHAVIOR

In an effort to introduce “a sound military strategy and external political dialogue to lessen East-West tensions” (Kugler 1999: 11) during the Cold War, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) proposed a ‘dual-track’ solution that stipulated the deployment of 572 nuclear missiles in Western Europe, 48 of which were planned to be stationed in the Netherlands (Van Dijk 2011: 1). The Dutch Defense Minister, Willem Scholten expressed his hesitation at the 1979 NATO summit in Brussels, arguing that “his government cannot *commit* itself yet to deploy its share of the new missiles” and that the Netherlands would arrive at a decision in December 1981 (Van Dijk 2011: 1, emphasis added).

The deployment of the NATO cruise missiles turned into a severe foreign policy problem by the early 1980s. The center-left coalition that came to power by 1981 “with the CDA, the Labour Party (PvdA), and Democrats ’66 (Left-liberals) which lasted barely a year” (Hagan, Everts, Fukui and Stempel 2001: 184) postponed the decision for the second time (Van Dijk 2011). In the six-year period since 1979, the Dutch decision was postponed three times by consecutive coalition governments until the minimalist Christian Democrat (CDA) and Liberal (VVD) coalition finally allowed deployment in 1985 (Hagan et al. 2001).

Belgian re-engagement with a former colony, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), climbed to the top of this country’s foreign policy agenda by the end of the 1990s. “The policy platform on Belgian-Congolese relations...*deviated from that of the previous coalition*” with the

incoming oversized coalition government of Liberals, Socialists and Greens in 1999 led by Guy Verhofstadt, which set out on “a more active intervention policy on the ground in the DRC” (Kelly 2007: 73, emphasis added). To mark this change in Belgian-Congolese relations, Kelly (2007: 75) explains that the premier himself paid an official visit to the DRC in 2000 for the first time any government had since 1990: “the trips set the Verhofstadt government apart...*indicated that the ‘rainbow’ coalition was in favor of increasing Belgian involvement* in its former colonies [sic]” (Kelly 2007: 75, emphasis added). Verhofstadt’s visit to the Congo was a sign of commitment on the Belgian government’s part towards building a closer relationship with this state.

“A coalition is a coalition is a coalition” in international politics. Clearly, the Dutch and the Belgian cases suggest otherwise: not only do the structures of these coalitions vary across countries, but they also act significantly different than their predecessors in each case, regarding the relations with NATO and the DRC. And yet, the existing literature continues to consider coalition governments in parliamentary systems to be a “homogenous” (Clare 2010: 967) category vis-à-vis single-party governments when explaining foreign policy behavior.

This dissertation challenges this viewpoint by unpacking coalitions. It asks: *how does the mathematical and ideological composition of parliamentary governments affect their foreign policy behavior—specifically, their international commitments?*

Take Kaarbo’s most recent contribution on coalition foreign policy choices (2012), for instance. She asks (2012: 2): do coalitions suffer from the multiplicity of parties in the government which impede their foreign policy, or do these governments enjoy greater room to pursue more “aggressive” foreign policy behavior due to “the institutional and political dynamics of coalition politics”? This dichotomy not only disregards the variation among coalition



governments as exemplified above, but it does injustice to the invaluable work by Kaarbo (1996a, 1996b) and Clare (2010), who have demonstrated that coalitions are more complicated than it is implied by the ‘one v. many parties’ distinction. Indeed, these scholars have demonstrated that the critical junior parties, which are so indispensable to the arithmetic setup of their coalitions that they can single-handedly bring them down by threatening to withdraw from them, can have an overwhelming influence on the international behavior of these governments.

The evidence suggests, in other words, that the mathematical organization of parties in coalitions matters in explaining foreign policy behavior. The dichotomous understanding of government composition, however, remains central to the empirical studies in the literature (Kaarbo and Beasley 2008), leading to a series of inconclusive findings over whether multiparty governments are more or less constrained than single-party governments in international politics.

Let us push this inquiry even further. The Dutch and the Belgian governments mentioned above were majority coalitions, commanding sizeable seat shares in parliament—but what about minority coalitions? Why did the minority coalition in Denmark, for instance, fail to strengthen its relations with NATO for six years during the Cold War? If this was a result of the government’s size vulnerability in the parliament, then how did the next minority government that came to power in 1988 manage to turn that policy around, ultimately joining other NATO countries in the 1990 naval blockade in the Gulf? In other words, are minority coalitions always at a disadvantage due to their seat share in the parliament as the existing literature claims, or can we think of other structural factors that allow them to circumvent these vulnerabilities and make stronger commitments in international politics?

The literature has argued time and again, for instance, that the “partisan sources of preference” (Kelly 2007: 75) is an important factor in explaining the international behavior of

democracies. “Political ideology and partisanship are important and overlooked sources of policy disagreement,” Kaarbo (2012: 7) contends, alluding to their influence on a government’s foreign policy behavior. Rathbun (2004: 8) concurs that “parties articulate and implement very different policies...due to their different ideological fundamentals”—a phenomenon that “calls into question the assumption of consistent national approaches in international affairs that has long been the dominant tradition in the policy literature” (also quoted in Kaarbo 2012: 7). These studies are correct to problematize the role of ideological differences in governments in explaining their foreign policy behavior. However, this is a puzzle that has not yet received systematic treatment. With the exception of a handful of studies that have tested the effects of relative party positioning (Clare 2010, Kaarbo 2012) or the coalition’s ideological location along the political left-right spectrum on international conflict behavior (Palmer, London and Regan 2004, Schuster and Maier 2006), the role of a coalition’s ideological differences on international behavior has been understudied.

The Dutch, Belgian and the Danish examples are therefore illustrative precisely because they compel us to ask new, more nuanced questions about the role of government composition on foreign policy behavior: Is the ‘single-party versus coalition’ dichotomy emphasized by Kaarbo (2012) and others enough to capture the variation in parliamentary governments to explain their international behavior; or is it time to further dissect this dichotomy? Is ‘the multiplicity of parties’ enough to define coalitions, or is there something more critical about the mathematical organization of parties in coalition governments that could influence their actions at the international level? It seems inevitable that when there are multiple parties in a government, there are multiple ideological camps—how do these differences influence the

government's international behavior? Can ideological differences explain the change in Belgium's foreign policy behavior toward Congo, or Denmark's toward NATO?

Despite the breadth of the literature on the domestic sources of foreign policy behavior in parliamentary democracies, the discussion above implies that our knowledge on the effects of government composition on international behavior is far from complete. Most critically, we still do not know the structural factors that drive foreign policy behavior in coalition governments.

This is a significant gap in the literature since coalitions are the predominant institutional outcome in parliamentary regimes (Gallagher, Laver and Mair 2006, Kaarbo 2012), where “the authority to make foreign policy and to respond to the international developments lies with the cabinet” (Kaarbo 2012: 3). Especially in Europe—the regional focus of this study—70 per cent of all governments have been coalitions since the end of the Second World War (Gallagher, Laver and Mair 2006). This number increases to 80 per cent in the period between 1994 and 2004, which is the focus of this study. The dramatic frequency of coalitions among European parliamentary democracies compels one to expect variation in the ways in which political parties come together mathematically and ideologically to form them, and consequentially, influence their international behavior. Thus, from an institutional perspective, dissecting the composition of coalition governments should also contribute to our broader understanding of parliamentary regimes and how they act at the international level.

This dissertation therefore argues that to answer this puzzle, it is time to move beyond the dichotomous conceptualization of government composition. With a focus on Europe in the post-Cold War period, the dissertation introduces a novel approach that scrutinizes the foreign policy behavior—more specifically, the *commitment* behavior—of parliamentary regimes based on the

ways in which political parties are organized along mathematical and ideological dimensions in the executive branch.

To undertake this puzzle, the dissertation utilizes the rich Comparative Politics literature on legislative politics, the theories of coalition politics and economic voting. Specifically, it offers to explain foreign policy behavior by refining two major theories in Comparative Politics: veto players (Tsebelis 1995) and the clarity of responsibility (Powell and Whitten 1993). By introducing two “principal theoretical” dimensions—(i) “the size perspective” and (ii) “the policy distance” between the parties that make up the government (Hagan et al. 2001: 174-175)—the dissertation fine-tunes these theoretical approaches to explain the variation in the intensity of international commitments. Furthermore, this dissertation contributes to the study of minority coalitions in foreign policy analysis by offering a new perspective to test the effects of their ideological composition as theorized by the ‘policy viability’ (Laver and Budge 1992) and ‘fragmented opposition’ (Hagan 1993) explanations.

To demonstrate the empirical vigor of the ‘government composition’ explanation, the dissertation adopts a multi-method approach. It first tests this explanation on a large-N foreign policy events dataset of European parliamentary regimes from the period between 1994 and 2004. As it will be demonstrated in Chapter 4, the multilevel regression analyses show that the ‘government composition’ explanation not only challenges the existing understanding in the literature that coalitions are constrained in their foreign policy behavior, but the analyses also illustrate that these behaviors vary significantly along the type of coalition and its ideological cohesion—what the dissertation calls its ‘policy incongruence.’ In other words, the large-N analyses reveal the correlations between government composition and international commitments.

Certainly, correlations are not enough to prove a theory. Even though the large-N analyses do a good job providing the big picture, it is equally important to show why those correlations exist by uncovering the mechanisms that link the composition of governments to their international commitments. How does a minority coalition circumvent its size vulnerability in the parliament to join war coalitions, for instance? Or, how is it possible that a minimum winning coalition that suffers from deep ideological splits still manages to increase its commitment intensity at the international level, such as contributing to international military operations? Furthermore, given the breadth of the literature on the domestic sources of international behavior, how does the ‘government composition’ approach perform against alternative explanations such as logrolling dynamics among political parties in the parliament, threats to national survival, public opinion, or political leadership?

To respond to these questions, the dissertation also introduces a qualitative research component. Specifically, it offers structured-focused comparative case studies of the Danish decision to join the Gulf War of 1990 as well as the Danish and the Dutch decisions to support the 2003 war in Iraq. Through these case studies, the dissertation contextualizes the correlational findings, uncovers the linkage mechanisms between government composition and international behavior, and evaluates the hypotheses regarding minority (Denmark) and minimum winning coalitions (the Netherlands) further by analyzing the role of alternative explanations that the large-N analysis cannot address.

Ultimately, this dissertation intends to contribute to the existing literature on coalition foreign policy in International Relations scholarship by unpacking coalitions and introducing a dynamic ‘coalition politics framework’ in the study of foreign policy behavior, particularly with a focus on international commitments.

The preceding discussion has alluded to the significance of studying coalition foreign policy by highlighting the need to unpack the structural characteristics of these governments. The next question concerns the other side of the equation: what is it that we explain when we discuss foreign policy behavior? In other words, now that the explanatory factors are spelled out, what is it about foreign policy behavior that needs to be explained—what do we mean by ‘commitment’? The next section turns to answer these questions.

### **Foreign Policy Behavior: Moderate, Extreme, Aggressive, Peaceful...or just ‘Committed’?**

Holsti (1992: 82) defines foreign policy as “ideas or actions designed by policy makers to solve a problem or promote some change in the policies, attitudes, or actions of another state or states, in non-state actors, in the international economy, or in the physical environment of the world.”

It is argued that to make sense of foreign policy, one must study it like the meteorologist studies the weather. Brady argues (1982: 17), for instance, that:

“The meteorologist describes the weather according to a number of dimensions: temperature, humidity, barometric pressure, wind direction and velocity, and precipitation probability, to cite a few examples. We learn little about the weather by knowing only one of these dimensions. Similarly, with foreign policies, describing these phenomena without anchoring them to a set of dimensions makes discussion and understanding difficult.”

Like meteorology, several dimensions characterize foreign policy: these include (a) the predecisional context (that is, inputs of the system), (b) the foreign policy processes (also known as the ‘black box’), (c) the output of decision making process, and finally, (d) the outcome properties, or the feedback mechanism, which begins when the policy is implemented (Brady 1982: 26).

This dissertation focuses on the dimension that concerns the outputs of the decision-making processes, defined as the foreign policy behavior.<sup>1</sup> Operationalized also as the foreign policy “event,” the dissertation utilizes foreign policy behavior as its main unit of analysis.

While ‘foreign policy’ concerns the general framework of principles or activities that the state adopts to organize its international relations, foreign policy behaviors “refer to the observable acts of individuals serving in an official governmental capacity” (Callahan 1982b: 293).<sup>2</sup> As such, they have also been compared to the “individual vote” in the field of electoral studies: focusing on the behavior “enables us to have a basic unit of analysis” (Brady 1982: 12) to study the foreign policy activities of the state, similar to the ways in which we use the vote to study the political activities of the individuals.

Foreign policy behaviors encapsulate the specific moments of government action, either with a cooperative or conflictual tone, towards an international counterpart. In effect, while ‘foreign policy’ provides the framework for state behavior at the international level, ‘foreign policy behavior’ becomes its primary indicator that gets “at those decision ‘process’ outcomes” such as the Belgian premier’s visit to the Congo in 2000 or the Dutch decision to provide political support for the US-led war in Iraq in 2003 “that are most likely affected by domestic politics” (Hagan 1993: 166). As such, using the foreign policy behavior as the unit of analysis is an additional strength for the present study, whose major objective is precisely to scrutinize the effects of domestic-level factors on these ‘decision process outcomes.’

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<sup>1</sup> In this study, foreign policy behavior is also referred to as ‘international behavior.’

<sup>2</sup> These behaviors may or may not stem from the designated foreign policy as described by Holsti (1992). Nevertheless, it has been argued that one of the major objectives of using events as a unit of analysis in the study of foreign policy analysis is to account for the overlaps (or lack thereof) between foreign policy and foreign policy behaviors (Callahan 1982b). This discussion, however, is outside the scope of the present study.

What is it that we explain when we study foreign policy behavior? A number of alternatives exist in the literature. Kaarbo and Beasley (2008) and Kaarbo (2012), for instance, study the moderate and extreme as well as the peaceful and aggressive forms of foreign policy behavior while testing the effects of single-party governments and coalitions. While the moderation-extremity dimension concerns the content of behavior, the peace-aggression dimension looks at its direction. Clearly, these notions pertain to foreign policy behaviors that go far beyond international conflict initiation or escalation, which have been studied extensively in the literature (Clare 2010, Ireland and Gartner 2001, Palmer et al. 2004, Prins and Sprecher 1999).

Still, these dimensions are by and large relative, and therefore prone to misinterpretation. For instance, while ‘political support for war’ could be understood as peaceful behavior within an alliance towards a third party, the third party itself could interpret it as a form of aggression towards itself. Similarly, the use of ‘extremity’ is susceptible to criticism as it is bounded by context. The 2000 Belgian official visit to the Congo—the first in 10 years—was certainly extreme within the context of the relations between these states, but one could still argue at the end of the day that this was at best a moderate form of behavior since it involved nothing more than an official visit paid by one government to another.

In an effort to circumvent the conceptual confusion that these terms could run into, this dissertation employs a more comprehensive and less controversial concept to frame foreign policy behaviors: their *commitment*, and more specifically, their *commitment intensity*.

As an attribute of foreign policy *output*—one of the four dimensions described earlier—commitment “concerns the creation in others the expectations about the actor’s future behavior” (Callahan 1982a: 176, see also Gaubatz 1996: 111). As commitments increase expectations, they



result in increasing the future decisional and behavioral constraints on the actor (Callahan 1982a: 182-183).

Commitments can generate expectations in two ways. The first concerns the explicit use of resources, or “resource commitment” (Callahan 1982a). States communicate to the international and domestic audiences that they actively invest in an international effort by contributing with their material capabilities. During the Gulf War of 1990, for instance, several European countries showed commitment through resource use: Italy contributed ten Tornado fighter-bombers and five warships, while Poland sent a field hospital, to name a few (*National Post* 2003). The Belgian visit to the Congo presented in the opening of this chapter was also a form of resource commitment that signaled Belgium’s intention to intensify its relationships with this country.

Studying the international commitments of European parliamentary democracies is therefore critical since they command considerable amounts of material resources. For instance, the amount of development aid given by Austria in 2004 was 1.3 billion US Dollars.<sup>3</sup> Active armed forces in Germany by the year 2000 were 321,000, making them the third strongest military in Europe after the United Kingdom and France.<sup>4</sup> These countries, among several others, are governed exclusively by coalitions and command incredible material resources. It is therefore important that we understand whether the composition of their governments influence their international commitments precisely because they have the authority to commit these resources, or at the very least, to signal that they might commit these resources in the future.

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<sup>3</sup> OECD (2010), “Development aid: Total official and private flows”, *Development: Key Tables from OECD*, No. 5, doi: 10.1787/20743866-2010-table5.

This amount is comparable to Somalia’s gross domestic product in 2012 (United Nations 2014: 15).

<sup>4</sup> “NATO and Non-Nato Europe” (2000), *The Military Balance*, 100 (1), pp. 61-65.

Indeed, states can also show commitment by verbally “pledging oneself [sic] to some outcome, course of action, or nation,” also defined as “binding commitment” (Callahan 1982a: 179), which may not require resource use.<sup>5</sup> President Obama wrote in a letter to President Peres of Israel in 2012, for instance, that “the United States remains steadfast in its commitment to Israel’s security and a comprehensive peace in the region” (Haaretz 2012). While this statement signals no use of resources unlike the Gulf War example, it clearly communicates that the United States binds itself to protecting the security of its foremost ally in the Middle East and to supporting peace in the region now and in the future. The 1979 NATO case discussed in the beginning of this chapter, on the other hand, was an incident of a failure to commit as the Dutch defense minister Scholten could not bind his government during the Summit to allow the deployment of the Dutch share of the missiles.

If commitments pertain to the resources used and pledges uttered that generate expectations for the future, the intensity of commitments is then simply a “function” of these factors (Callahan 1982a: 183). In other words, commitments will be more intense the more future decisional and behavioral constraints they exert on the actor. They may incur more constraints when they utilize “the reserves of scarce resources and thus limit[s] the range of future [policy] options,” or when they verbally bind “the actor to certain options” (Callahan 1982a: 182).

Which types of commitments are more capable of exerting constraints on the actor? While some argue that verbal behavior is ineffective in generating expectations in and of itself

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<sup>5</sup> In the instance that binding commitments do not require resource use, it becomes “very problematic at the point of observation” (Callahan 1982a: 179). This is why, for instance, events datasets are useful in compiling these types of commitments alongside those that require resources. As it will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, with the help of events datasets, we pay as much attention to pledges or promises, for instance, which are essentially types of verbal behavior, as we do to nonverbal behavior that generally manifests itself in some form of resource allocation.

(Schelling 1960: 65), others contend that “actions are not automatically less ambiguous than words” (Jervis 1970: 19). “A nonverbal action unaccompanied by a verbal explanation will produce relatively diffuse expectations,” Callahan (1982a: 188) contends, suggesting that verbal behavior complements and even provides clearer meanings to the nonverbal behavior, as well as creating “strong, self-perpetuating pressures for the commitment’s fulfillment” (Weinstein 1969: 41). Callahan (1982a) accommodates both of these views by claiming that resource commitment (i.e. nonverbal action) and binding commitment (i.e. verbal action) are interactive in nature. As Chapter 3 discusses in greater detail, the various scales of commitment intensity in the literature illustrate this interactive relationship (Callahan 1982a, East 1973, Goldstein 1992).

What is the significance of studying commitment as a specific characteristic of foreign policy behavior? For one, commitments matter for international politics as well as for domestic politics. As the audience costs literature has argued numerous times, unfulfilled commitments not only create domestic unrest and build distrust toward the leader (Fearon 1997, Gaubatz 1996), they also increase uncertainty at the international level (Callahan 1982a: 183). Gaubatz (1996) makes the convincing case that international commitments are especially critical for democracies since they create expectations at the domestic and at the international levels, which, if they are not met, may lead to electoral punishment as well as a decline in international credibility.

Therefore, studying the executive conditions under which parliamentary governments pursue varying intensities of international commitment matters precisely because it could help manage expectations about the foreign policy behaviors of these regimes.

Indeed, discovering the factors that explain the international commitments of democracies is important for policymakers around the world. For instance, Sobel and Shiraev

(2003: 299, emphasis added) use the decisions to join international peacekeeping operations—a form of highly intense international commitment—to stress that “few people want their country to take steps irrespective of what other nations do. *The existence of an understanding about other countries’ commitment* is therefore an important condition of domestic support.” It is therefore important to focus on commitments not least because the term provides a far less slippery conceptual framework to study the variation in foreign policy behavior. The political implications of commitments also push policymakers to identify the structural factors that explain them to more safely navigate in the high seas of domestic and international politics.

This dissertation contends that ‘government composition’ provides the key structural explanation to do so. The fact that “most of the cables going to Washington from the embassy during the 2006 Dutch debate regarding troops for Afghanistan were about explaining and predicting the effects of coalition politics” (Kaarbo 2012: 81) precisely attests to the importance of this explanation in understanding how parliamentary regimes like the Netherlands that are often governed by coalitions make their commitment decisions. In sum, to the extent that the ‘coalition politics framework’ introduced in this dissertation reveals how some parliamentary governments are much more constrained or enabled to make higher-intensity commitments than others due to the nature of their arithmetic and ideological compositions, it will contribute not only to the literature on the domestic political explanations of foreign policy behavior, but expand our knowledge towards developing more efficient foreign policies when interacting with these regimes.

## **Bounded and Innovative: The Scope of the Study**

In order to undertake this research task, the dissertation builds on the principles that have been championed by the foundational works in its home field of Comparative Foreign Policy, namely, attention to actor-level detail while maintaining the systematization of analysis to discover parsimonious relationships. In turn, these principles help define the scope of the project. Therefore, before moving on to a summary of its organization, it is necessary to provide a brief discussion of where this dissertation is situated within the broader framework of the Comparative Foreign Policy scholarship, as well as an explanation of its scope.

Attention to actor-level variation in explaining international political outcomes distinguishes the study of Comparative Foreign Policy from the mainstream field of International Relations. Of course, this is not to say that International Relations scholars entirely dismiss the nuances across actors to maintain the parsimony and generalizability of their theories. For instance, the literatures on the “democratic peace” and the neoclassical realist approach in International Relations theory are two important areas where nuance and parsimony go together in explaining international outcomes. Indeed, some of the studies produced in these areas are influential precisely because they consider actor-level variation to evaluate the explanatory power of these theories.

The “democratic peace” literature, for instance, provides a great setting to observe how this widely tested theory of International Relations can be further refined at the actor-level to enhance its predictive power. Elman’s (2000) comparative case study on democracy and conflict behavior is among the first to explain how democratic actors in international politics do not homogeneously conform to the expectations of the democratic peace theory that “democracies are more pacific than other regimes in general” (Quackenbush and Rudy 2009, also see Rummel

1995, Leeds and Davis 1999). Instead, Elman (2000) contends that these regimes vary significantly in their hawkish capacities based on the extent to which their executive-legislative dynamics favor one branch's preferences over the other. In other words, Elman focuses on the institutional variation among democratic actors to demonstrate that democratic subtypes do exist and yield substantially different outcomes for international politics, contrary to the more generalized expectation of the democratic peace theory.<sup>6</sup>

Similarly, the neoclassical realist approach in International Relations has been a major source of challenge to the realist school in this field while supporting the epistemological foundations of Comparative Foreign Policy. Whereas realism takes states as unitary actors, Schweller's (2004) neoclassical realist approach focuses on the intervening "unit-level variables" such as elite consensus or social cohesion at the domestic level to show that states often act contrary to realist predictions and fail to balance each other at the systemic level, or "underbalance." This approach thus contends that the mediating effects of domestic political "pathologies" may prevent a state from behaving by realist reflexes. In this sense, the conclusions reached by Schweller (2004) resemble those of Elman (2000), as both studies underscore the need to qualify the respective general theories with state-level variables and shed light on the "complexity of reality" (Hudson and Vore 1995).

This is precisely what Comparative Foreign Policy (CFP) seeks to accomplish as it emphasizes the merits of shifting from actor-general theories to actor-specific theories in International Relations (George 1993, Hudson and Vore 1995, Hudson 2005). This approach

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<sup>6</sup> Certainly, one can argue that this dissertation, too, contributes to the institutional analysis of democratic foreign policy by developing an even more nuanced explanation of international commitments based on the executive structures of European parliamentary systems. More specifically, this dissertation contributes to the democratic peace debate by demonstrating that even a subset of democracies—parliamentary systems—are far more diverse at the executive-level than the existing IR scholarship presumes.

helps demonstrate that most instances of international interactions among states are at least influenced and at most determined by what takes place at the domestic level, that is, by what is specific to the actor.

In his foundational work on CFP, *Pretheories and Theories of Foreign Policy*, Rosenau (1966) suggested the development of middle-range theories to push the actor-specific approach further. Through mid-range theorizing, it is argued that we can “tease out cross-nationally applicable generalizations about the foreign policy behavior of states in a systematic and scientific fashion” while developing explanations that span multiple levels of analysis<sup>7</sup> and engage multiple causal pathways (Hudson and Vore 1995: 212-213).

This endeavor, however, requires great attention to detail, which paradoxically challenges another principle of Comparative Foreign Policy, which concerns commitment to parsimony. Scholars of CFP aspire to provide an explanation of international politics that is parsimonious enough to be generalized across a broad set of cases, yet detailed enough to underscore the critical mediating factors at the domestic as well as the individual or international levels, which might be essential to understanding the linkages and the mechanisms between the causes and their expected or unexpected effects on international politics. Hudson and Vore (1995: 220) summarize this dilemma as “CFP methods demanded parsimony in the theories that guided research” while “CFP theories demanded nuance and detail in the methods used.”

As a corrective, Kegley (1980: 19) has proposed that foreign policy theories can be “contextually-qualified, circumstantially-bounded, and temporally/spatially-specified” to better accommodate Rosenau’s (1966) initial framework. Foreign policy theories, in other words, can

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<sup>7</sup> In his seminal review essay, *Realism and Domestic Politics*, Zakaria (1992: 197) also argues that “a good explanation of foreign policy ... must separate the effects of the various levels of international politics.”

still be the multicausal, multilevel, systematic and scientific explanations that Rosenau championed if they are limited—and within the limits, these theories can still be the strongest explanations of foreign policy out there.

This dissertation follows Kegley's (1980) advice, which brings us to the scope of the study. Namely, the dissertation is bounded temporally and spatially, as well as institutionally while adopting a multicausal and multilevel approach that systematically tests the effects of government composition on international behavior. These limitations, however, do not weaken the explanatory power of the 'coalition politics framework' introduced in this study. Instead, they justify how and why the framework is a strong explanation against other alternative explanations given these boundaries.

First and foremost, the framework that is introduced in this dissertation applies to post-Cold War foreign policy behaviors. A major reason behind the decision to limit the temporal applicability of the framework is the decreased role of systemic factors that used to define and constrain international behavior during the Cold War, and the simultaneous rise of the "determinants" measured at the individual- and state-levels to explain international relations (Stein 2006, see also Hermann and Hagan 1998). Indeed, Stein (2006: 195) argues that in the post-Cold War era determinants assume center stage in "filling in the explanatory gap left by the indeterminacy of structural factors," stating "when context does not impel, human choice takes center stage." The 'coalition politics framework' introduced here implies that parties (by way of their representatives in the government) have the decisive ability to influence the way in which the government will act at the international level, and that they use their ability within the context of the mathematical and ideological composition of this government. This marks a substantial departure from the systemic explanations that dominated the study of international



relations and foreign policy during the Cold War, where the internal dynamics of states and decision-makers were considered, and possibly were, second-order factors.

Second, the ‘coalition politics framework’ offered in this dissertation only focuses on parliamentary democracies. The reason for this institutional limitation is due to the way in which executive-legislative relations are designed in these regimes. Specifically, the executive in parliamentary systems is a natural extension of the winners of the elections for the legislative branch, which implies that the mathematical and ideological composition of the parliament following the elections will be reflected in the government and thus will be an important defining factor in explaining government behavior at the international level.

In addition, “the government serves at the pleasure of parliament,” in these regimes and that “[the government] is stable as long as it is supported by a legislative majority” (Clare 2010, see also Lijphart 1999), suggesting that from a decision-making perspective the government is impossible to detach from the parliament from which it stems (Frognier 1993, Hagan 1993, Auerswald 1999, Prins and Sprecher 1999, Ireland and Gartner 2001, Palmer, London, and Regan 2004, Kaarbo and Beasley 2008). This is contrary to presidential regimes where the executive is mutually exclusive from the parliament as the former assumes power through separate elections and thus does not necessarily reflect the mathematical or ideological setup of the legislative branch. In sum, parliamentary regimes provide a suitable universe of cases for a study that focuses on the dynamics of those executives that stem from the legislative branch with distinct arithmetic privileges and ideological diversity.

Third and finally, the framework introduced in this dissertation incurs a spatial limitation as it focuses on the post-Cold War parliamentary democracies in Europe. It is well-known that in proportional representational (PR) electoral systems, parties win seats proportional to their vote

shares at the district-level, which translate into multiparty competition (known as *Duverger's Law*). This leads to multiparty parliaments, most frequently resulting in coalition governments, which is the dominant game in town for European political systems, as described earlier. In other words, as the dominant type of executive in this region, studying the foreign policy behavior of coalitions in Europe facilitates comparison across a substantial number of cases while keeping constant many other structural factors (geography, economic development, etc.) that may posit alternative explanations. By limiting the scope of the study to post-Cold War European parliamentary systems, therefore, the dissertation provides the largest possible room to assess the role of government composition as well as other alternative domestic-, individual-, or international-level factors on the international commitments of these democracies.

To set the stage for what follows in the remainder of this dissertation, the next section presents an outline of chapters below.

### **Outline of Chapters:**

#### ***Chapter 2. Building Bridges to Explain Coalition Foreign Policy***

This chapter begins by discussing the current state of the literature on government composition and international behavior. By pointing out the weaknesses and the inconclusive findings of this body of research, the chapter then brings in the ‘veto players’ and ‘the clarity of responsibility’ explanations in Comparative Politics to more systematically frame the discussion regarding whether coalitions are more or less constrained than single-party governments in foreign policy. Next, in an effort to refine these theories to study international commitments, it introduces the ‘missing link’ in this debate, which concerns the two major dimensions of government composition: the type of government (specifically, multiparty governments) that is based on the

distribution of party seats in parliament, and the degree of ideological diversity among these parties that make up the government. To push this discussion further, the chapter also distinguishes minority coalitions and discusses the role of ideology in these governments by bringing in the theory of ‘policy viability’ and the notion of ‘fragmented opposition’. The chapter concludes by laying out the hypotheses, which will be tested quantitatively in Chapter 4.

### ***Chapter 3. A Multi-Method Approach to Studying the International Commitments of Coalitions***

This chapter introduces the multi-method research approach utilized for the project and argues that to fully capture the analytical power of the government composition explanation, it is important to employ both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Next, the chapter introduces the core components of the research design, namely the operationalization and the measurement of the key independent and the dependent variables, which will be utilized throughout the empirical analyses. This is followed by the detailed explanations of the quantitative and qualitative components of the research design. In the quantitative component, the chapter discusses the foreign policy events dataset as well as the specific independent, dependent and control variables that will be incorporated in the regression analyses. The quantitative component of the chapter concludes with a discussion of the weaknesses of the existing estimation approaches in the literature, and introduces the multilevel modeling approach that will be used in the quantitative analyses. Next, the chapter moves on to the qualitative component of the multi-method research design. Here, a discussion of the case selection strategies, the method of structured-focused comparison, and variable specifications will be

introduced. The chapter concludes with a summary of the multi-method design and final thoughts.

#### ***Chapter 4. Coalition Governments and International Commitments: A Quantitative Analysis***

This chapter presents a quantitative analysis using the foreign policy events of 30 European parliamentary regimes across the 1994-2004 period. The chapter is divided into three parts, where each part utilizes one alternative measure of the policy incongruence variable discussed in Chapter 3, namely the standard deviation of party positions from the mean left-right policy position of the coalition, ideological range of the coalition, and whether the coalition crosses the center of the political spectrum by including parties from both the left and the right. The findings of this chapter conclude that the mathematical and ideological organization of parties in coalition governments exert diverse effects on commitment intensity. Finally, the chapter presents a country-level analysis through the use of the multi-level estimates that are provided by the regression analysis. With the help of the country-level discussion, the chapter concludes by reiterating the necessity to develop the framework with qualitative analyses.

#### ***Chapter 5. 'Reaching Across the Aisle': Policy Viability and Danish International Commitments***

This chapter presents a structured-focused comparative case study of two instances in Danish foreign policy commitments in the post-Cold War period, namely the 1990 decision to participate in the Gulf operation and the 2003 decision to join the US-led war in Iraq. Through these cases, the chapter intends to push the findings in Chapter 4 further by uncovering the mechanism behind the commitments of minority coalitions at varying levels of policy

incongruence, and testing the explanatory power of the ‘policy viability’ and ‘fragmented opposition’ approaches against a series of alternative explanations. The chapter begins with an overview of the Danish political system and foreign policy orientations during the post-Cold War period, followed by the case analyses of the 1990 and the 2003 decisions, respectively. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the findings and their implications.

### ***Chapter 6. When Disagreements Lead to Commitments: Dutch Foreign Policy Behavior in the 2003 Iraq War***

This chapter intends to investigate one of the anomalous findings in Chapter 4, regarding minimum winning coalitions. To uncover the mechanism behind the relationship between ideological composition and international commitments in minimum winning coalitions, the chapter focuses on the Dutch decision to provide support for the 2003 Iraq war. It begins with a discussion of the domestic and international political context in the Netherlands to set the stage for the analysis. Next, it introduces the case analysis by utilizing the method of structured-focused comparison. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the results.

### ***Chapter 7. Nuance and Parsimony in Coalition Foreign Policy: What Do We Know, Where Do We Go?***

This chapter concludes the dissertation by arguing that nuance and parsimony can be achieved simultaneously in the study of coalition foreign policy. It sets the stage for this discussion by first providing an overview of the research puzzle and its significance, followed by the summary of qualitative and quantitative findings. This chapter then provides a visual summary of the ‘coalition politics framework’ to demonstrate that the ‘government composition’ explanation is

situated at its core, where international-, domestic- and individual-level factors further provide the contexts to explain commitment behavior in parliamentary governments. The chapter then moves on to discussing the contributions of the project to the literature. It concludes with some reflections on the limitations of the study and suggests avenues for future research.

## CHAPTER 2

### BUILDING BRIDGES TO EXPLAIN COALITION FOREIGN POLICY

#### Introduction

As argued in Chapter 1, the current state of the literature on government composition and foreign policy behavior has been inconclusive, particularly with respect to the coalition governments in parliamentary regimes. This chapter proposes a theoretical bridge between Comparative Politics and International Relations to discuss and resolve this debate by introducing a more refined understanding of government composition by unpacking coalitions along mathematical and ideological dimensions. As the rest of this chapter will show, by building bridges<sup>8</sup> between the Comparative Politics research on legislative politics, theories of coalitions and economic voting on one hand and the field of Comparative Foreign Policy in International Relations on the other, we can uncover the patterns and the linkages through which government composition can lead to differential outcomes in the ways that the executive branches in parliamentary systems engage in international commitments.

This chapter therefore provides a theoretical discussion toward developing a ‘coalition politics framework’ to study international commitments, though with an explanatory capacity defined by its temporal, institutional, and spatial boundaries, which has been discussed at length previously in Chapter 1. Within the limits of these boundaries, however, the framework is the

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<sup>8</sup> Hudson (2005: 5), too, contends that foreign policy analysis “is often a natural bridge from IR to other fields, such as comparative politics and public policy. FPA [sic]’s ability to speak to domestic political constraints and contexts provides a common language between FPA and comparative politics.”

first attempt in the literature that utilizes a multilevel and multicausal approach to systematically study how government composition affects foreign policy behavior.

The chapter begins with a survey of the existing studies in the field that tackle the relationship between domestic political institutions, specifically those pertaining to governments, and the international behavior of parliamentary democracies. Most importantly, it will demonstrate that the Comparative Politics theories, namely the veto players and the clarity of responsibility approaches, introduce an exceptionally useful framework to structure the debate that has so far remained inconclusive in its findings. The chapter will then use these theories to address the existing theoretical gaps in the study of coalition foreign policy, namely the lack of an understanding of how political parties are organized mathematically and ideologically in coalitions. The chapter then introduces the key independent variables, government (coalition) type and policy incongruence to further refine these theories, followed by the hypotheses. Next, the chapter will zoom out and discuss alternative explanations: since ‘government composition’ is one of several plausible explanations of foreign policy behavior in the literature, it is necessary to acknowledge these alternative explanations, which could influence international commitments alongside the key argument offered here. The chapter will conclude with a summary of the theoretical framework and some concluding thoughts.

### **Domestic Political Institutions and International Behavior**

The effects of domestic political institutions on the international behavior of democratic regimes have received significant attention, especially with the rise of the democratic peace literature. As democracies vary substantively among each other, new research avenues have begun to focus on



the (often domestic) sources of this variation and their possible effects on the regime's international behavior.

To that end, studies have looked at several factors that pertain to democratic political institutions. For instance, research on public opinion and audience costs (Fearon 1997, Leeds 1999, Reiter and Tillman 2002, Tomz 2007) claim that through their "statements and actions," democracies generate "domestic expectations that will lead to audience costs or electoral punishment if a leader fails to carry out an international commitment" (Gaubatz 1996: 123). This literature suggests that it is the public opinion and accountability aspects of democracies that lead these regimes to a particular behavioral path at the international level, implying that audience costs may vary among democracies to the extent that citizens show a clear interest and concern about the international standing of their state (Tomz 2007: 837).

The impact of elections and electoral institutions (Gaubatz 1991, Leblang and Chan 2003), and executive-legislative relations (Elman 2000, Reiter and Tillman 2002) are some of the other venues that branch out from this field of study. It has been argued, for instance, that democracies are more likely to engage in war in the immediate period after an election but less so prior to it, showing that the war involvement of these regimes is associated with election cycles (Gaubatz 1991). Similarly, the balance of power between the executive and the legislative bodies in democracies is studied as a source of variation among democracies that leads to differences in their belligerent international behavior (Elman 2000), as Chapter 1 has also discussed.

Within this body of research, government composition has been studied numerous times to explain the foreign policy behavior of parliamentary democracies, specifically concerning their conflict behavior. It has been hypothesized that the basic structural differences of these

governments, such as having one or many parties in the executive or whether the government holds majority or minority status in the parliament, should influence how they act in the foreign policy arena. The next section provides an overview of this literature and suggests that Comparative Politics theories on government composition can frame the extant discussion a lot more effectively.

### **Constraining or Enabling? Contending Theories on the Effects of Government Composition**

As Chapter 1 has discussed at length, the existing research has focused on the dichotomy of having one or many parties in government to explain how governmental constraints influence international behavior, but it has remained inconclusive over their effects. This chapter proposes that, first, this research agenda can be framed by two Comparative Politics theories: the veto players approach (Tsebelis 1995), and the clarity of government responsibility approach, also known as “economic voting” (Powell and Whitten 1993).<sup>9</sup> While these approaches generate diverging expectations on the effect of having a single party (majority) government on its foreign policy behavior, as I demonstrate further below, incorporating the variation among types of governments as well as the ideological differences among the parties that make up a government alter these expectations significantly.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Vowles (2010) also compares the expectations of these two causal mechanisms to explain electoral accountability.

<sup>10</sup> To their credit, Hagan, Everts, Fukui and Stempel (2001: 175) do borrow from coalition theories in Comparative Politics and browse a number of conditions that “lead separate, often contending, actors to achieve agreement on foreign policy.” Among these factors they mention policy distance (Axelrod 1970, De Swaan 1973) or presence of a pivotal actor in the coalition (De Swaan 1973). However, as I will show below, only a handful of recent studies have tackled these factors, and they, too, have their shortcomings.

First, take the veto players approach. Veto players are “individual or collective actors whose agreement is necessary for a change of the status quo” (Tsebelis 1999: 591). From this theoretical perspective, a coalition government implies the presence of at least one and possibly several veto players, whose agreement is necessary to make policy decisions and implement them. Studies in Comparative Politics demonstrate that having many actors in government inhibits the government’s ability to move away from the status quo. Roubini and Sachs (1989) show that having multiple parties in government acts as a barrier against decreasing budget deficits.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, Tsebelis (1999) shows that increasing the number of veto players leads to a decrease in the likelihood of producing significant labor law in Western Europe. In sum, this approach contends that coalitions are cumbersome, constrained, inefficient, and often contentious.

Many International Relations scholars also argue that multi-party coalitions are more constrained in their international conflict behavior than single-party governments.<sup>12</sup> Hagan (1993), Elman (2000), Ireland and Gartner (2001), Reiter and Tillman (2002), and Palmer and his coauthors (2004) argue that coalitions should suffer from more constraints than single-party governments due to having too many parties that get involved in decision-making. As far as political outcomes are concerned, Elman (2000) argues that having too many parties will lead to “middle-of-the-road” foreign policies, which implies more moderate behavior than one would expect under a single-party government. The empirical results, however, are mixed. Whereas some studies conclude that coalitions are less likely to be involved in international disputes than single-party governments (Palmer, London, and Regan 2004), others find no relationship

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<sup>11</sup> The authors argue that logrolling and collective action problems stop these actors from reaching a consensus to stop government spending (Roubini and Sachs 1989).

<sup>12</sup> For simplicity, the term “single-party government” will refer to single-party majority governments in this study unless otherwise is stated.

between conflict initiation and the number of parties in government (Leblang and Chan 2003, Reiter and Tillman 2002), suggesting that single-party governments are not significantly different than multiparty governments in their belligerent behavior. Most recently, based on a series of case studies from parliamentary regimes such as the Netherlands, Japan and Turkey, Kaarbo (2012: 244) has argued that coalitions “are prone to deadlock and delay. But they also show signs of good decision,” suggesting that there is no conclusive evidence as to the constrained nature of coalitions in foreign policy.

The clarity of government responsibility (Powell and Whitten 1993) predicts an opposing effect for coalition governments on policy.<sup>13</sup> It has been argued that in proportional representation systems with coalition governments, if voters cast votes based on the parties’ past performance (e.g. retrospective voting) than on their expected future performance, the voters’ evaluation will be “compromised because the lines of responsibility will be blurred [for the coalition parties]” (Hobolt and Karp 2010: 304, Figure 2). Originally an explanation on the electoral consequences of national economic policy, the clarity approach has been tested quantitatively to show that “when clarity of responsibility is obscured and when the level of responsibility is low, governing parties are less affected by how citizens evaluate the nation’s economy” (Anderson 2000: 168).

Studies testing the clarity of responsibility theory argue that the number of parties in government affects the government’s likelihood of being held responsible by the voters for its

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<sup>13</sup> To their credit, Powell and Whitten (1993) use a more comprehensive index of institutional traits, including number of parties in government, cabinet stability, opposition influence on policymaking and party cohesion that collectively make a system more or less accountable. In this study I use only the number of government parties to resonate my study with the rest of the literature on parliamentary foreign policy. It should be noted that other studies on clarity of responsibility also isolate the number of parties as a main indicator of level of accountability in public policy (Anderson 2000, Tavits 2007).

actions (Fisher and Hobolt 2010). Strom (1990) and Alesina and Rosenthal (1995), for instance, discuss how single-party governments are more constrained and cautious than coalitions “because they are reluctant to invite domestic political challenge, perhaps to the point of forcing an election” (Leblang and Chan 2003: 390). More recent studies in Comparative Politics have looked at corruption levels (Tavits 2007) and public sector growth (Bawn and Rosenbluth 2006) to argue that increasing the number of parties in government leads to higher levels of corruption and larger public sectors, respectively. These studies all point to a decisional environment where accountability is compromised.

In sum, this approach suggests that governments which are less likely to be held to account will have more room to pursue policies that, if failed, will not have detrimental consequences on the political future of the governing parties. Therefore, the expectation is the opposite of what was proposed by the veto players approach: coalitions suffer from less scrutiny than single-party governments, and thus they are able to pursue riskier policies (Downs and Rocke 1995) that do not have to be moderate, and, if they fail, the electoral punishment will not be too high.

IR scholars discuss the less constrained nature of coalitions by looking at conflict involvement—a risky pursuit with serious potential electoral costs. Prins and Sprecher (1999: 275) expect that “with coalition governments, the voting public may be less able to attach responsibility to any one party for policy failures,” which might encourage these governments to “be more willing to reciprocate militarized disputes.” Along the same lines, Palmer et al. (2004) claim that having larger coalitions and more pivotal parties will increase the likelihood of

conflict involvement,<sup>14</sup> though they fail to conclude that such structural factors have any effect on dispute escalation. More recently, Kaarbo and Beasley (2008, see also the quantitative analyses in Kaarbo 2012) find that coalitions act more extreme (i.e. more cooperative or conflictual) than single-party governments in their international behavior.

It is important to acknowledge here that with the exception of Kaarbo and Beasley's (2008) work on extreme foreign policy behavior, an overwhelming majority of the aforementioned studies that focus on the effect of government composition take conflict behavior as their main dependent variable. This is understandable given how these studies are cousins to the democratic peace literature, and that conflict is really the only type of international phenomenon that is so sensational that it gets attention from scholars and policymakers alike. However, limiting the dependent variable only to conflict behavior (initiation, escalation, or simply involvement) precludes the flipside of the coin, that is, cooperative behavior, which may or may not include risky and overly committed policies. Indeed, Kaarbo and Beasley (2008) and Kaarbo (2012) have already pointed to this weakness in the literature.

Furthermore, relations among states rarely involve major conflicts relative to the massive amount of interactions that take place among them every day. In other words, there is a much wider range of international behavior out there that easily outnumbers the widely studied conflict events that international relations scholars frequently focus on. This study not only takes into

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<sup>14</sup> Palmer, London and Regan conceptualize democratic governments with multiple veto players as low removal threshold (LRT) regimes. They contend that once these LRT regimes get involved in conflict, "the necessary outcome to keep the office is less likely to exist in the range of possible outcomes associated with peace than is true for the HRT [high removal threshold] leader. Thus it is that the lower the removal threshold that a leader faces, the more likely it is that, given involvement in conflict, the leader will have to gamble on escalation in order to find redemption" (2004: 8). In other words, the authors claim that once LRT regimes are involved in conflict, they are forced to escalate rather than back down or seek a quick, peaceful resolution, which resonates with the audience costs literature discussed earlier in this chapter.

account this wider range of foreign policy behaviors but further makes the case that the effects of domestic-level variables in international relations should be more noticeable if the analytical focus is on ‘commitments,’ which “is a major act domestically” (Hagan 1993: 95). Specification of the dependent variable, however, is only one of the analytical weaknesses in the existing literature. What we really lack is a more nuanced specification of governments in parliamentary systems, namely their mathematical and ideological composition.

### **The Missing Link? Ideological Cohesion and Government Type**

The above discussion illustrates that there are two competing explanations in the literature on government structures and foreign policy behavior, yet neither of them provides conclusive results. I argue that the common weakness of these studies is that they neglect two important characteristics that further differentiate single-party governments and coalitions: the degree of ideological differences among the parties that make up the coalition as well as their mathematical organization, yielding different types of multiparty governments. As I show below, the explanatory powers of both the veto players or the clarity of responsibility approaches are conditional on the ideological affinity of the parties inside the coalition and its type—specifically, whether the coalition enjoys a strong or weak parliamentary majority, or no majority at all.

The role that the ideological cohesion of a government plays in policymaking is a central component of the veto players framework (Tsebelis 1995). In his study on labor law legislation, for instance, Tsebelis (1999) demonstrates that the ideological range of a coalition is a mediating factor on policy stability: coalitions with a wider ideological range are unable to produce laws, whereas coalitions with a narrower range are less so. Similarly, some have argued that economic

growth rates are affected by the political constraints exerted by the size and distribution of political preferences inside a government (Henisz 2000), and others have tested whether the ability to manage health care costs is affected by the partisan composition of the government (Huber 1998).

From the perspective of foreign policy analysis, Hagan, Everts, Fukui and Stempel (2001: 171) also argue that a “defining feature of a coalition decision unit centers around the effects that each actor’s constituencies can have on members of the decision unit.” To the extent that constituencies expect the coalition actors to act according to their positions already determined along the national political spectrum, these actors will be constrained as well as guided by these positions that are simplified here as “ideological positions” during the processes of foreign policy decision-making. It is for this reason that Hagan underscores the ideological differences among coalition partners to argue that “there is little long-term interest shared in sustaining the unsatisfactory compromise arrangement of a multiparty coalition” (1993: 72). The discussion suggests that when coalition parties come from diverse ideological backgrounds, their differences impede their willingness to act together.<sup>15</sup>

However, the structural conditions under which a coalition’s ideological differences impede its ability to make international commitments are still unclear. As Clare (2010: 970, emphasis added) argues, “if governments that are less vulnerable to breakdown are also less

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<sup>15</sup> Contrary to this claim, recall Leblang and Chan’s initial expectation, which states that since coalition governments represent a broader array of the electorate, they should be less constrained in “making controversial policies” (2003: 390). The underlying assumption of the authors, however, is that while coalitions may represent a larger share of the electorate, they are simply not constrained by the diversity of opinions or policy preferences they represent as individual political parties that garner votes based on their platforms. While coalition governments may enjoy a larger winning selectorate (Buono de Mesquita and Lalman 1992), it does not necessarily imply decreased constraints on the executive unless the coalition partners (and hence the voters) share exactly the same set of policy preferences. This is obviously very unlikely.



constrained in their foreign policies, then *variation in the cohesion or fractionalization of coalition cabinets* should have significant implications for understanding their conflict behavior.” Therefore, explaining foreign policy behavior from a veto players perspective remains incomplete unless we consider the ideological diversity inside governments in relation to their mathematical composition. The interaction is critical for multiparty governments, which may or may not enjoy stable majorities in the parliament, as I illustrate below in Table 2.1.

It is important to note that existing studies in foreign policy analysis do not disregard the role of ideology altogether. As Chapter 1 has also discussed, more recent works in this field have stressed the importance of looking at “partisan sources of preference” (Kelly 2007: 75) to explain the variation in foreign policy choices. Others continue to point to the need to “bring parties in” (Schuster and Maier 2006: 237) to this research area by highlighting the fact that “disagreements between parties over foreign policy issues are quite common and often as fiercely debated as those about domestic issues” (Schuster and Maier 2006: 230). The debate suggests that parties in government, by way of their ideological differences, may diverge on foreign policy, which should be studied far more closely. Most of the existing contributions, however, focus only on the relative positions of coalition parties vis-à-vis each other rather than the overall ideological cohesion inside the government to demonstrate how partisan discord leads to foreign policy outcomes.

A recent study, for instance, has demonstrated that when there are no ideologically outlier parties in coalition governments, they “act similar to single-party governments in their [conflict] initiatory propensity” (Clare 2010: 985), thus concluding that cohesive coalitions are able to

circumvent the veto player effect of pivotal junior partners.<sup>16</sup> Clare (2010) reaches this conclusion, however, by looking at the relative position of the junior partner vis-à-vis the rest of the coalition as opposed to taking the coalition government as a whole to measure its overall ideological congruence, which might be critical to consider when there are multiple pivotal junior partners.<sup>17</sup>

Similarly, Kaarbo (2012) tests the ideological position of the junior partner relative to that of the senior partner in coalitions to explain extremity in international behavior. She has also argued, however, that focusing on the relative party placements could be misleading (2012: 58). In this sense, using the *absolute* ideological positions of all partners as opposed to their relative positions vis-à-vis the senior partner should be more explanatory in studying coalition foreign policy. In sum, the literature has not systematically tested how the ideological distribution of parties in a government affects its foreign policy behavior, even though it has resonated strongly with the theoretical underpinnings of the veto players approach, where ideological cohesion is an indispensable analytical component.

This nuanced understanding is similarly important to test the clarity of responsibility thesis, which also disregards the ideological cohesion of coalitions. If the theory holds true as it stands, all coalitions must benefit from responsibility diffusion and survive the future electoral

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<sup>16</sup> A pivotal, or critical junior party is defined as “a small party in a minority or a minimum winning coalition that has the power to dissolve the government by defecting from the coalition and taking away the number of parliamentary seats it controls that are necessary for the maintenance of the cabinet” (Kaarbo 1996b: 507, also see Laver and Schofield 1990).

<sup>17</sup> Moreover, Clare (2010) goes on to argue that these ideological positions will translate into more militarist foreign policies for right-wing governments, and left-parties will be more accommodative. This is an important and possibly misleading assumption as left-wing governments may very well be belligerent depending on what foreign policy issue they have to deal with. What I argue, on the other hand, relaxes this assumption and looks at whether these ideological differences lead to deadlocks or an increased propensity to commit. Hence, my approach provides a more generalizable conclusion about the conditions under which governments behave more committed.

consequences of their international commitments despite the ideological differences inside them. If not, accounting for the ideological disparities among coalition parties will reveal whether responsibility gets more diffused under certain conditions, such as where the government enjoys a high level of ideological similarity, or congruence. In sum, even though previous studies point out the importance of ideology in policy outputs at the domestic as well as the international level, the precise effect of the overall ideological divergence among the players on foreign policy behavior is still unknown, and this is the first caveat of the existing studies. Addressing this gap constitutes one of the major contributions of this project.

A second caveat in the existing studies concerns explicating the mathematical composition of governments in parliamentary regimes. How can we differentiate governments, particularly coalitions, to capture their peculiarities? Two alternatives exist in the literature that uses (a) the number of parties to suggest that the higher the number of parties in a government, the bigger the coalition, and (b) the parliamentary seat percentage of the government parties to suggest that the strength of the coalition increases with its seat share in the parliament.

Neither of these alternatives correctly captures the ways in which political parties contribute to the strength and stability of their governments vis-à-vis the parliament. First, using the parliamentary seat share of a coalition to measure its strength (Kaarbo and Beasley 2008, see also Kaarbo 2012) is particularly misleading in proportional representation contexts, where parties are more disciplined and ideologically coherent (Leblang and Chan 2003). For instance, we know from Denmark, a country that uses proportional representation, that “all coalitions are based on the understanding that...*party cohesion is generally very high*” (Damgaard 2000: 246, emphasis added). The Danish example suggests that an individual-based measure such as the seat percentage of government parties in parliament will be inadequate in capturing coalition strength

since individual MPs *belonging to the same party* are expected to vote in the same direction. Counting the MPs to measure the coalition's parliamentary strength (say, towards voting for a legislative bill) is irrelevant, in other words, if we know that party unity will compel all MPs from the same party to reject the proposal. In these contexts, therefore, counting the parties provides a better measure for coalition strength than counting the MPs.

Having said that, using the number of parties independently is not a clear indicator of coalition strength either—the number of parties in a government does not always tell us whether it is a majority government or not, or whether it is able to survive defections. One can easily observe in the post-Cold War period that minority coalitions can be composed of two parties in countries such as Ireland and Denmark or as many as seven parties in Italy. While the party-based approach to measuring coalition size assumes that ‘more is better,’ many contradictory cases also exist, suggesting that one should go beyond a simple indicator of government number of parties to measure coalition strength. What is most critical for coalitions, in fact, is how parties *and* their seat shares in parliament together contribute to the overall strength and stability of the government.

Indeed, even foreign policy scholars admit that “that the main difference is between coalitions with the minimal number of parties required for a parliamentary majority (“minimal winning”) and those with either too few (“undersized cabinets”) or more (“oversized coalitions”) members than are necessary” (Clare 2010: 968), as they refer to Comparativist work by Riker (1962) and Dodd (1976). What would benefit Comparative Foreign Policy scholars, then, is to frame the discussion around the conventional typologies so that their findings resonate with the similar work done in Comparative Politics both theoretically and empirically that facilitates generalizations. It is for this reason that in contrast with the above alternatives to explicate

coalitions such as looking at the parliamentary seat share of a coalition or the number of parties it has, here it is proposed that we adopt the categories that are used in Comparative Politics research—namely minority, minimum winning, and oversized (also known as “surplus majority”) coalitions (Lijphart 1999). Table 2.1 below illustrates this point more clearly with an example.

<i>Tweede Kamer (150 seats)</i>	Parties in Government			Total Seat Share
	PvdA	VVD	D66	
<b>Coalition I: Wim Kok (1994-1998)</b>	24.6%	20.6%	16.0%	61.3%
<b>Coalition II: Wim Kok (1999-2002)</b>	30.0%	26.0%	9.3%	65.3%

Table 2.1 Why Coalition Types Matter, the Netherlands

Wim Kok, the Dutch premier, was fortunate enough to get reelected consecutively between 1994 and 2002 with the same coalition partners, the Labour Party (PvdA), the Liberal Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD) and the Democrats (D66). Moreover, these three parties captured almost the same percentage of seats in the parliament in 1994 and in 1999, as Table 2.1 shows.

Is anything fundamentally different between these two governments? If we measured coalition size and strength by following the existing literature, we would find no difference: these governments have the same number of parties as well as almost identical parliamentary seat shares. What still makes them significantly different, however, is how each of these parties contributes to the stability of the government. While *Coalition I* requires the presence of all three parties to maintain parliamentary majority, therefore making it a ‘minimum winning’ coalition,

*Coalition II* could have done just as well without the D66 in the government given the combined seat shares of the PvdA and VVD, suggesting that it is now an ‘oversized coalition.’ By the same token, while D66 could enjoy its veto player position in *Coalition I* and threaten the government with defection, it loses this bargaining power in *Coalition II*, which is expected to influence the policy outputs.

Therefore, unpacking coalitions provides a dynamic conceptualization of governments based not only on the number of parties or whether the coalition holds parliamentary majority or not, but on how coalition parties contribute to the coalition’s overall parliamentary strength and help cushion it against defections. This approach first and foremost refines the veto players perspective as it relaxes the assumption that the influence of veto players will be constant across all coalitional settings, regardless of the fact that some coalition types (e.g. oversized coalitions) are formed specifically to inhibit the influence of these players, since no extra party can veto the government altogether in an oversized coalition. As the second Wim Kok government in the Netherlands illustrates, oversized governments constitute a special type of coalition where the participation of several parties strengthen the government in the parliament while circumventing the veto potential of the smaller partners.

Investigating the specific types of coalitions also helps refine the clarity of responsibility approach: do all multiparty governments blur the lines of responsibility, or do some coalitions enjoy a *greater* ability to diffuse responsibility among its partners? A closer, more nuanced look at governments can reveal whether responsibility gets more diffused under certain coalitional configurations like those which include more parties than necessary. This approach encourages us to test whether the diffusion theory simply works as long as there is a multiparty government or when this government maintains a strong and stable majority in the parliament.

The expectations of the veto players and clarity of responsibility theories are still primarily concerned with majority coalitions, however. If the government holds only 50 per cent or fewer of the seats in the parliament, one could argue that whether or not it includes one or several parties does not necessarily mean more or less freedom in decision-making and consequently, more or less intense commitments. In fact, many scholars argue that the parliamentary weakness of minority governments leaves them at the “mercy of the legislature” (Lijphart 1999), constrains policymaking, and translates into “moderate policy” (Clare 2010; Hagan 1993; Ireland and Gartner 2001; Maoz and Russett 1993; Vowles 2010). Therefore, the two theories remain less relevant for coalitions which hold minority status in parliament. Adopting a “size” perspective would be far more suitable to account for these governments.<sup>18</sup>

Ultimately, the fine-grained approach proposed in this dissertation calls for revisiting the existing studies in foreign policy analysis. For instance, Auerswald (1999: 477) argues that “coalition premiers will only reluctantly use force, as they must pay particular attention to achieving immediate success or risk a parliamentary revolt, *especially if the governing coalition*

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<sup>18</sup> However, not all scholars find minority coalitions to be doomed to parliamentary weakness. Strom (1997: 56) describes minority governments as “majority governments in disguise” since they receive outside support from the parliament without actually holding any portfolios. Lijphart (1999: 104) goes even further to argue that “it makes the most sense, both theoretically and practically, to treat minority cabinets like oversized coalitions.” To the extent that minority governments are treated as majority governments, these scholars suggest that one can continue to treat explanations of coalition behavior at the domestic as well as the international level as equally applicable to all government types.

Empirically, this is hardly plausible. If minority coalitions truly resembled majority coalitions, let alone oversized coalitions, in their ability to make policy, one would expect their durations to resemble too. We know, however, that minority coalitions are a lot less durable than majority coalitions. Conrad and Golder (2010: 131) show that in post-Cold War Central and Eastern Europe, the average duration of minority coalitions were 364 days whereas for surplus (oversized) coalitions it was 608 days. In other words, surplus coalitions have been almost twice as durable as minority coalitions, attesting to the structural weaknesses of minority coalitions in policy-making as well as execution. This is why we should study them as they are, as a separate category of cases.

*is fragile*” (emphasis added). What fragility entails, however, remains vague. Coalition fragility can emanate from its mathematical or ideological setup, *or both*. Coalitions might be fragile and constrained if they do not enjoy safe majorities such as those enjoyed by oversized coalitions, in which there is at least one party that “can be removed with the remaining members still controlling a majority of seats” (Carrubba and Volden 2004: 526), implying a weaker or even non-existent veto power for some of the junior parties.

Having said that, oversized coalitions may also suffer from “policymaker’s blocks” when the ideological differences among the governing parties are hard to reconcile, which make these coalitions even harder to maintain and can even gradually make them fragile. For instance, Israel’s oversized coalition under Ariel Sharon weakened and ultimately dissolved as the non-pivotal coalition partners initially began to leave the coalition as a reaction to Sharon’s 2005 proposal to dismantle the settlements in Gaza (Spruyt 2009). Kaarbo’s (1996a) case study also shows that the oversized coalition led by Yitzhak Shamir had been stuck in a deadlock for three weeks over the issue of the 1989 peace initiatives.

Multi-party governments might also be formed as minimum winning coalitions, where the defection of at least one party leads to the government’s loss of parliamentary majority. The ideological positions of parties should also matter in a minimum winning coalition, where each party is a pivotal actor with the ability to credibly threaten to leave the government (Clare 2010). Ideologically incongruent coalitions may be either deadlocked as pivotal players oppose policy change and possibly cause the government to dissolve, or they may choose to act in a way that requires less commitment in order not to antagonize any coalition partner. The Dutch NATO cruise missile case introduced earlier in Chapter 1 is an example: since the governing parties at the time could not agree, they chose to postpone the deployment of the missiles.



Ideological composition is also critical for minority coalitions, even though the existing discussions and the empirical support against the capacity of minority coalitions to execute policy, one of which is to engage in international commitments, continue to disregard this component of government composition.

The lack of emphasis on the ideological composition of minority coalitions is surprising given the exciting research implications of existing theoretical works on governments and oppositions in parliaments. For instance, Hagan (1993: 83, emphasis added) argues that “like the regime’s itself, strength of party opposition depends upon its internal cohesiveness. *If a sizeable number of opposition seats are controlled by different parties*, then it is less likely that they will be able (or even willing) to work together to mount an effective assault on the regime [sic] and its policies.”

One scenario where this is possible is a minority coalition, where the opposition controls the majority of the parliamentary seats. The question is, how can one make sure that the opposition seats belong to parties as far away and different from each other as possible?

The answer lies in the composition of the minority coalition: to the extent that the ideological composition of the minority coalition leaves the opposition fragmented, the government will enjoy the room to embark upon foreign policy commitments, while the opposition parties remain without the ideological incentive to stand against the government’s actions. In Comparative Politics research, Laver and Budge (1992) discuss this phenomenon by using the term “policy viability.” The authors argue that so long as “there is no majority legislative coalition that prefers an alternative,” a minority coalition that includes the core party will not be defeated by the parliament (1992: 5). The government will be policy viable, in other words, “if its policy position is such that there is no alternative executive coalition that can put

forward a credible policy position that is preferred to the incumbent by a majority of legislators” (Laver and Budge 1992: 6). Therefore, explicating government types and their ideological cohesion refines the veto players and clarity of responsibility theories, as well as the size perspective and unpacks the structural conditions that affect the intensity of international commitments.

## **Hypotheses**

The above discussion brings me to the hypotheses. First, I replicate a previous research that uses minority governments<sup>19</sup> and coalitions as the main independent variables (Kaarbo and Beasley 2008). As argued earlier in this chapter, there is a general consensus on minority governments that their parliamentary weakness makes them vulnerable vis-à-vis the opposition (Lijphart 1999), impedes policymaking, and results in “moderate policy” (Frognier 1993, Hagan 1993, Maoz and Russett 1993, Ireland and Gartner 2001, Clare 2010, Vowles 2010). The arithmetic disadvantage of minority governments leads to the expectation that they will engage in less committed international behavior than majority governments.

***Hypothesis 1:** Due to their size vulnerability, minority governments will be negatively associated with commitment intensity.*

Second, the contending theories lead to two opposing hypotheses. If the veto players theory explains coalition foreign policy behavior, then it is expected that all coalitions will be negatively associated with commitment intensity. If the mechanism is the clarity of responsibility, however, then the relationship must be positive.

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<sup>19</sup> Minority governments can be composed of one or many parties.

***Hypothesis 2a:*** All coalition governments will be negatively associated with commitment intensity (veto player approach).

***Hypothesis 2b:*** All coalition governments will be positively associated with commitment intensity in their international behavior (clarity of responsibility approach).

The above expectations, however, neither account for the extent of ideological disagreements among the coalition parties nor the government type to explicitly evaluate the two approaches. The next two hypotheses refine the clarity of responsibility approach by bringing in these variables. First, if responsibility always gets diffused in multiparty majority governments and leads to a greater ability to commit, then all types of majority coalitions should have a positive effect on commitment intensity, even when ideological differences are controlled for.

***Hypothesis 3a:*** After controlling for ideological differences, both oversized coalitions and minimum winning coalitions will have a positive relationship with commitment intensity.

However, by definition, oversized coalitions include more parties than necessary compared to minimum winning coalitions.<sup>20</sup> If responsibility gets more diffused in coalitions with more parties, then oversized coalitions should have a stronger positive association with commitment intensity than minimum winning coalitions while controlling for ideological differences. It will be safe to conclude that diffusion is not the best mechanism to explain commitment intensity across majority coalitions if Hypotheses 3a and 3b are not supported.

***Hypothesis 3b:*** After controlling for ideological differences, oversized coalitions will engage in more committed behavior than minimum winning coalitions.

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<sup>20</sup> For the present dataset, the correlation coefficient for minimum winning coalitions and number of parties is 0.18; for oversized coalitions it is 0.41. On average, minimum winning coalitions have 2.7, oversized coalitions have 3.9 parties.

The next two hypotheses refine the veto players approach by testing the interaction between coalition types and ideological cohesion. The veto players theory expects that majority coalitions will be negatively associated with commitment intensity—especially when governing parties share lower levels of ideological affinity. Thus, at increasing levels of ideological disunity, oversized coalitions should be negatively associated with commitment intensity compared to single-party majority governments. Similarly, minimum winning coalitions should also be negatively associated with commitment intensity compared to single-party majority governments, as ideological disagreements increase among the coalition partners

***Hypothesis 4a:** At increasing levels of ideological disunity inside the government, oversized coalitions will be negatively associated with commitment intensity compared to single-party majority governments.*

***Hypothesis 4b:** At increasing levels of ideological disunity inside the government, minimum winning coalitions will be negatively associated with commitment intensity compared to single-party majority governments.*

Finally, I use the size perspective to explain the commitment behavior of minority coalitions. If minority coalitions are at a constant parliamentary disadvantage due to their size, they must have a negative effect on commitment intensity regardless of the extent of ideological differences inside them.

***Hypothesis 5a:** Minority coalitions will be negatively associated with commitment intensity regardless of the ideological differences among the coalition parties.*

However, if minority coalitions are formed so that they leave the parliamentary opposition ideologically fragmented, then they will be able to pursue more committed

international behavior than single-party majority governments, as expected by Hagan (1993) and the policy viability (Laver and Budge 1992) explanation.

***Hypothesis 5b:** If minority coalitions can ideologically fragment the parliamentary opposition, they will be positively associated with commitment intensity compared to single-party majority governments.*

### **Alternative Explanations of Foreign Policy Behavior**

It is argued in the literature that the ‘size’ and the ‘ideology’ dimensions of coalitions “form the core of the coalition theory” (Hagan et al. 2001: 175). This provides strong analytical leverage for the theoretical framework introduced in this chapter, which builds precisely on these dimensions to unpack coalitions in order to assess the effects of government composition on the intensity of international commitments.

Even though the present work provides the much-needed attention to detail in the parliamentary executives as suggested by Hagan et al. (2001) to study their foreign policy behavior, it is important to proceed with caution: this approach hardly sweeps the many other alternative explanations that exist in the literature on foreign policy behavior. It is certainly plausible to expect that factors other than the size of the coalition and policy incongruence among its partners contribute to explaining why certain governments make more intense commitments in their international relations than others. These factors may provide the linkage mechanisms, or perform as the inhibiting/reinforcing/facilitating conditions, that explicate the relationships between government composition and commitment intensity. This section provides a discussion of some of these alternative explanations that exist in the literature, whose expectations will be evaluated with qualitative analyses in Chapters 5 and 6.

One alternative explanation that Hagan et al. (2001: 175) discuss is the “willingness of one group to accept side payments” (also see Browne and Frensdreis 1980, Hinckley 1981) in return for support for other policy proposals. *Logrolling among political parties* has been frequently introduced to explain how governments overcome policy deadlocks by offering side-payments to defecting actors, such as promises of support for future policies (Hagan 1993: 221, also see Kaarbo 1996b). Logrolling might also lead to more committed international behavior than otherwise anticipated (such as overexpansion), when parties yield to each other’s more ambitious preferences (Snyder 1991) for future payoffs.

Kaarbo’s (1996b) work on coalition foreign policy provides useful insights on how parties benefit from logrolling. She focuses on the influence of junior partners in “logrolling coalitions,” where these smaller parties can get what they want by using their ability to “hijack” foreign policy decision-making process (Kaarbo 1996b: 502) as they have the ability to dissolve the government by withdrawal (Clare 2010). Logrolling could therefore be a mechanism frequently used in minimum winning coalitions where parties, each of which is a veto player, consent to each other’s preferences for future payoffs in their own preferred direction. Similarly, these parties could also yield to each other’s preferences merely for the sake of remaining in power, i.e. for government survival. Besides minimum winning coalitions, logrolling could also work for minority coalitions as the latter could overcome their size vulnerability in the parliament by cooperating with extra-governmental political parties and offering them side-payments in exchange for their support for a proposed foreign policy commitment.

Another alternative explanation that finds emphasis in the literature concerns the “existence of *consensus-making norms*” (Hagan et al. 2001: 175), such as those which used to dominate the Dutch political system (Baylis 1989). Decision-making environments that are

characterized by norms that appreciate consensus among policymakers may alleviate the governmental constraints which may otherwise have impeded the government's ability to commit in international relations. Minority coalitions may still work with the opposition parties towards building a broader parliamentary support base for their proposed foreign policy commitment if the consensus-making norms are already embedded in the political system. Similarly, minimum winning coalitions may be able to steer clear of crises if the political system has traditionally favored consensus politics.

The literature also debates whether *public opinion* can influence foreign policy behavior. Some scholars argue that public opinion hardly affects foreign policy and if anything, the relationship takes place in the opposite direction such that foreign policy influences public opinion instead (Leeds and Davis 1997: 817). In his study on how governments fulfill their commitments once they verbally bind themselves, Lantis finds that public support is not an explanation for sustaining commitments (1997: 197). Others qualify this claim by explaining how public support has to be specific and focused on the foreign policy issue to have influence on government behavior (Kaarbo 1996a: 268). Pointing out the difficulties of measuring the effects of public opinion empirically, Everts and Van Staden argue that "public opinion is only one of the factors shaping the outcome of the political process, and one cannot easily isolate the impact of one factor from that of others" (1986: 125). It is thus plausible to expect that public opinion should have some kind of direct, or, more realistically, indirect effect on governments. Governments are expected not to pursue those international behaviors if the public shows considerable opposition to the idea.

*Threat to the survival of the regime* is another alternative explanation that could outweigh the effects of government composition on international commitments. Auerswald (1999: 470)

argues that while coalitions should be less likely to use force than single-party majority governments, this “should hold true as long as the national survival of the democracy is not threatened.” Metselaar and Verbeek (1997: 109) also argue that disagreements will be pushed aside and partners will work together to reach consensus when survival is at stake. For instance, during one of the most volatile time periods in Turkish politics, an extremely fragile two-party government comprising the centre-right True Path Party (Dogru Yol Partisi) and the social democratic Republican People’s Party (CHP) put their continuous infighting aside to respond to the Kardak crisis. When a Turkish ship accidentally hit an islet called Kardak (*Imia*) on the Aegean Sea in December 1995, the tense relations between Greece and Turkey were further jeopardized, initiating claims of sovereignty on the islet from both sides. The Turkish government showed notable cohesiveness and soon declared that Kardak was within its sovereign jurisdiction (Migdalovitz 1996: 1) and even deployed naval troops (*Cumhuriyet*, 2014)—a form of highly intense international commitment—despite the tough relationship between its two governing parties. In other words, threats to the regime<sup>21</sup> and to national survival should be taken into account as environmental conditions that can influence the foreign policy commitments of any government, regardless of its size or ideological composition.

Finally, the influence of strong *political leaders* finds emphasis in the literature as an alternative explanation. The leader’s special interest in the issue (Hermann, Preston, Korany and Shaw 2001, Kaarbo and Hermann 1998), her previous experience in that foreign policy area, or

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<sup>21</sup> Domestic economic deterioration, another source of threat to government survival, might also overcome the constraints on decision-making caused by government composition. This time, in an effort to divert attention away from home, a declining trend in the economy might encourage governments to engage in committed behavior at the international level (DeRouen 1995, Fordham 1998). Indeed, Brule and Williams (2009: 777) argue that minority governments “are more likely to initiate disputes when faced with poor economic conditions, because these executives are likely to face resistance to remedial economic policy.”



her psychological traits (Hermann 2005) are some of the individual-level factors that might go alongside the effects of government composition in explaining foreign policy behavior. Lantis (1997) explains, for example, that Helmut Schmidt's leadership was a key factor in explaining Germany's decision to join the European Monetary System in 1978, when he was leading a coalition government comprising the Christian Democrats and Social Democrats. Beyond Europe, Kuperman (2001: 24) looks at the foreign policies of Israeli coalitions in the 1950s to argue that the prime minister's position prevailed in foreign policy over those of other ministers or the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF).

Further, "the strong tendency for a contraction of authority to the highest levels of government" during international crises (Hermann et al. 2001) could also push leaders to overcome the institutional constraints imposed by the government's size and ideological composition, resulting in leader-driven behaviors at the international level. In sum, it is important to consider whether key leaders in foreign policy (such as prime ministers or foreign ministers) show significant efforts to challenge the government-level constraints to achieve certain foreign policy decisions, such as the commitments to participate in international operations.

The discussion presented in this section suggests that with the exception of public opinion<sup>22</sup> and political leadership,<sup>23</sup> most of these factors are difficult to quantify and integrate in the statistical analyses of foreign policy behavior. Furthermore, the literature suggests that these

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<sup>22</sup> Even though public opinion ratings are far easier to incorporate in quantitative datasets than the other alternative variables discussed here, it still requires a considerable amount of time and resources to track the public opinion ratings for all the governments in the 30 European countries included in the analysis *and* match these ratings to the time-stamped international events analyzed in the quantitative component of this dissertation. Therefore, I consider public opinion as an alternative explanation in the qualitative analyses rather than in the quantitative.

<sup>23</sup> Hermann's (2005) Leadership Trait Analysis (LTA) is an exception. By adopting content-analytic approaches to measure leader traits such as openness to information, distrust of others or attitudes toward constraints, leadership styles can be quantified and incorporated in statistical analyses.

factors often act as conditioning or intervening variables as opposed to having independent effects on foreign policy behaviors, which further complicates the task of estimating their effects quantitatively. Therefore, given the nature of these variables, their effects can be best traced by utilizing qualitative methodologies, which is discussed at greater length in Chapter 3.

## **Conclusion**

It has been suggested in Chapter 1 that as it shifts the focus from actor-general to actor-specific explanations, the field of Comparative Foreign Policy provides a window of opportunity to build bridges between International Relations and other fields in Political Science, particularly Comparative Politics, to investigate the behavior of democracies in international politics. As such, theories of Comparative Foreign Policy aspire to bring domestic-level variables toward building a multilevel explanation, while its methods emphasize systematic and rigorous scientific analysis. With the understanding that achieving theoretical depth while maintaining methodological rigor inevitably leads to less-than-universal explanations, this chapter has offered a theoretical framework for studying coalition foreign policy that is temporally limited to Cold War, spatially limited to Europe, and institutionally limited to parliamentary democracies. Within these boundaries, however, the framework stands as theoretically the most detailed explanation in the literature while still suitable for methodologically rigorous empirical testing.

It has been discussed in this chapter that the literature on the effects of government composition on the foreign policy differences in parliamentary systems has largely remained inconclusive over whether single-party governments are less constrained than multi-party coalitions in their international endeavors. The precise effect of the government's size in the parliament—whether it commands parliamentary majority or not—has also not yet been clarified

in the literature. Most importantly, the ways in which the ideological diversity of parties in a government affects its foreign policy behavior has not been systematically investigated in the literature.

This chapter has argued that this research program can be invigorated by incorporating two major Comparative Politics theories: the veto players and the clarity of responsibility approaches, and has emphasized that they perform exceptionally well to theoretically frame the debate over government composition in the foreign policy literature. The chapter has also argued, however, that they must be further refined to truly explicate the relationship between coalition governments and the intensity of their international commitments.

To undertake this task, the chapter has proposed two distinct but mutually important components of government composition: (i) the mathematical organization of parties in the government that yields the *government type* (specifically, the types of coalitions), and (ii) the ideological organization of parties in the government that yields its *policy incongruence*—whose operationalizations will be discussed in Chapter 3 at greater length.

Based on these two key components of government composition in parliamentary regimes, the hypotheses presented here are designed to capture the independent as well as the interactive effects of these variables on the dependent variable, that is, commitment intensity, with the objective that the findings will help refine the explanatory power of Comparative Politics theories on foreign policy behavior. This way, one should be able to not only uncover the precise governmental conditions under which governments act more committed at the international level, but also shed light on how the coalition theories explained in this chapter have differential explanatory powers for the study of foreign policy behavior.

This chapter has also cautioned the reader against tunnel vision. While the two major dimensions—size and ideology—of coalition theory in Comparative Politics provide the building blocks of the ‘government composition’ explanation introduced in this chapter to unpack none other than the coalition governments themselves, it is also critical to acknowledge that several alternative explanations exist in the literature on foreign policy behavior. Therefore, in order to strengthen the analytical vigor of the ‘government composition’ explanation, this chapter has also offered a discussion of some of these alternative explanations. This discussion has also illustrated that these explanations are not necessarily confined to the domestic-level, that foreign policy behavior can be studied by utilizing multiple levels of analysis: individual-level factors such as political leadership can be just as important to influence foreign policy behavior as logrolling, or threats to national survival.

Together with its central and alternative components, the theoretical discussion presented here offers a multicausal, multilevel framework of coalition politics as prescribed by the Comparative Foreign Policy scholarship to explain the international commitments of post-Cold War parliamentary democracies in Europe. The next chapter explains the multi-method research strategy adopted in the dissertation to test the explanatory capacity of this theoretical framework.

## CHAPTER 3

### A MULTI-METHOD APPROACH TO STUDYING COALITION FOREIGN POLICY BEHAVIOR

This dissertation offers a theoretical framework to explain the international commitment intensity of parliamentary democracies by focusing on the mathematical and ideological composition of governments in these regimes. As Chapter 2 has discussed in detail, this explanation intends to resolve the existing dilemma in the literature on whether single-party governments are more or less constrained than coalition governments in their capacity to act at the international level.

The most efficient way to solve this puzzle is to utilize quantitative methodologies. By employing rigorous statistical methods, the effects of the key government composition variables on commitment intensity can be tested across a large number of cases of foreign policy behavior. In effect, quantitative analysis can provide the big picture in a parsimonious fashion: it can highlight the size and the direction of the correlation between government composition variables and commitment intensity, and therefore help clarify whether the dichotomous understanding of governments in parliamentary systems is adequate to study their foreign policy behavior. If not, quantitative analysis can show us how government types and policy incongruence drive commitment intensity in different directions.

Solving this dilemma is not enough, however, to comprehensively demonstrate the explanatory power of the ‘government composition’ approach. In other words, statistical relationships alone are inadequate to argue that any variation in the commitment intensity of a

government is the direct outcome of a change in its composition. To make that case, the mechanisms through which government composition affect the intensity of commitments in these regimes should be revealed.

To explicate these mechanisms, it is necessary to take a closer look at foreign policy behavior by adopting qualitative approaches. By utilizing in-depth studies of a small number of cases, qualitative analysis helps uncover the mechanisms that justify the relationship between government composition and international commitments.

The need to engage with both of these avenues of analysis to establish the explanatory power of the ‘government composition’ approach brings me to ‘multi-method’ research. Multi-method approaches, namely “the idea of nested designs, the iterated use of qualitative and quantitative methods, and the role of qualitative anomalies in reorienting quantitative research” (Collier and Elman 2008: 782) advocate the interactive use of multiple methodologies to solve research puzzles and test the explanatory capacity of theoretical contributions.

This dissertation adopts a multi-method research design to study the effects of government composition on international commitments. The multi-method approach offers an effective methodological toolbox that helps achieve both cross-national generalizations on the effects of government composition on international commitments as well as explicate the mechanisms that link these factors to each other.

The present chapter provides a detailed discussion of this effort by illuminating the quantitative and qualitative research design trajectories of the project. First, it presents an account of the quantitative trajectory that has been developed to test the key relationship of interest—that between government composition and international commitments. This quantitative component incorporates a large-N foreign policy events dataset of 30 European

parliamentary systems from the post-Cold War period, between 1994 and 2004. It is designed to provide the size and the direction of the independent and interactive effects of the key government composition variables on the intensity of international commitments. The quantitative component of the research design, in other words, helps model the relationship between government composition and international commitments in bigger, more generalizable terms, which will be demonstrated with a series of multilevel regression analyses in Chapter 4.

Next, the present chapter introduces the qualitative trajectory. This trajectory employs a small-N approach to comparatively analyze the Danish decisions to participate in the 1990 war in the Gulf and the 2003 war in Iraq, as well as the Dutch decision to support the 2003 war in Iraq, which will be presented in Chapters 5 and 6, respectively. The main purpose of the qualitative research design component is to complement the systematized empirical tests and scrutinize the resulting parsimonious relationships with in-depth inquiries that explicate the mechanisms that link the composition of governments in these states to their political and material commitments in international military operations.

Furthermore, the qualitative component evaluates the alternative explanations discussed in Chapter 2 such as logrolling, political leadership, public opinion or threats to national survival, many of which “turn on key conditions that *evolve* during policy-making” and can be evaluated “only with a case study approach” (Kaarbo 2012: 11, emphasis added). In effect, the case analyses also help demonstrate how the ‘government composition’ explanation performs against the alternative explanations that are discussed frequently in the literature.

Ultimately, the qualitative component contextualizes the relationship between government composition and international commitments to explicate the facilitating, inhibiting, or reinforcing factors at the international, domestic, or individual levels. As a result, the multi-

method research design of the dissertation also strongly resonates with one of the major objectives of Comparative Foreign Policy scholarship as discussed in Chapter 1—that we should test the actor-specific theories of foreign policy with a multicausal, multilevel analytical approach.

In order to develop a multicausal, multilevel analysis of commitment intensity while maintaining a balance between nuance and parsimony, it is undoubtedly necessary to scale the explanatory scope of the project. As argued extensively in Chapter 1, this dissertation does it with a research design whose boundaries are defined by post-Cold War European parliamentary systems, specifically between 1994 and 2004. These limitations are by no means weaknesses, however. Confining the analysis to Europe helps control for geographical, economic and institutional variation in a region that is almost exclusively governed by parliamentary governments. This leaves greater room to test the effects of other explanations of foreign policy behavior. Furthermore, foreign policy has become an important agenda item for these regimes especially after the demise of the Soviet Union and with the rise of the European integration process, not to mention the ethnic crises in the Balkans that produced two regional wars during this period and resulted in a number of territorial rearrangements. In this sense, post-Cold War Europe provides a fruitful setting to design a multicausal, multilevel study that examines the international commitments of parliamentary regimes.

Ultimately, the multi-method research design that will be explained in the remainder of this chapter provides a testing ground to assess why and how each method contributes to our knowledge of the effects of government composition on foreign policy behavior. In effect, it offers a window of opportunity to take the research agenda to the next level by encouraging us to learn from the nuances of the case studies and to think about new ways to apply them to



improved quantitative tests in the future. Therefore, the multi-method approach offered here becomes a useful design fit to carry out the Rosenau-Kegley prescription on formulating bounded, mid-range theories of foreign policy, an example of which is the present study. It provides an efficient methodological strategy to respond to the dilemma between “grand unified theories” and “microlevel detail” that Comparative Foreign Policy scholarship aspires to resolve (Hudson and Vore 1995).

The chapter proceeds as follows. The first two sections provide the general framework for both quantitative and qualitative components. Specifically, the first section explains how the key independent variables, government types and policy incongruence, were developed. The second section discusses the operationalization and measurement of the dependent variable, namely ‘commitment intensity,’ which stems from the notion of the ‘foreign policy event.’ The chapter then moves on to explaining the quantitative component of the research design in the third section by presenting the foreign policy events dataset, as well as the specific dependent, independent and the control variables that will be used in the regression analyses. The fourth section includes a discussion of the existing regression modeling approaches and their weaknesses, and explains the multilevel estimation approach that will be utilized for the quantitative component. Next, the chapter will move on to the qualitative component of the research design. The three sections in this component will respectively discuss the case selection strategies, the method of structured-focused comparison (George 1979) utilized for the case analyses, and variable specifications. The chapter will conclude with an overview of the multi-method strategy and concluding thoughts.

## **Measuring Government Composition**

This dissertation argues that the government type and the extent of ideological differences among government parties constitute the two major dimensions to specify the executive structure in parliamentary regimes, and therefore they are the key domestic politics factors in explaining their commitment intensity at the international level. As argued in the previous chapters, this is a significant departure from the existing studies in the literature that focus on the dichotomy between single-party and multi-party governments (Kaarbo and Beasley 2008). This section provides a methodological account of how these key variables were conceptualized and operationalized.

### *i. Government Types*

The first key component of the coalition politics framework introduced in this dissertation concern the government types that are observed in European parliamentary systems. In order to identify the government types and their frequencies during the post-Cold War period specified in this dissertation, it is first necessary to decide when to count, or code for, a new government. Following Lijphart (1984), a new government is coded whenever any of the following four conditions was met:

- (i) When there is a new parliamentary election,
- (ii) When there is a new Prime Minister, even though the party composition of the coalition stays the same,
- (iii) When the party composition of the coalition changes (a party leaves the coalition and/or a new one joins),

- (iv) When the Prime Minister or the cabinet resigns, but is reinstated by the Head of State (see also Warwick, 1992; Browne, Gleiber and Mashoba, 1984).

Although the above rules capture the majority of conditions under which government change occurs during the 1994-2004 period in Europe that this study primarily focuses on, some conditions are still left outside of their scope.<sup>24</sup> For instance, it is meaningful to expect that governments which act as caretaker bodies no longer engage in policymaking in the same way as a government that continues its electoral mandate. While the rules listed above account for the physical changes in government, they do not consider the psychological changes that arise from being an elected government towards becoming a temporarily appointed government (i.e. caretaker). To fill this gap, the following rule was included in the coding procedure.

- (v) When the party composition of the government stays the same, but the government is designated as caretaker according to the *Economist Intelligence Unit* reports, a new government is coded.

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<sup>24</sup> It is important to account for those instances which alter the parliamentary strength of the government, such as massive resignations from a coalition party due to intra-party disagreements, for instance. Accounting for this intra-party shock is critical since, as it will be discussed in detail below, this project assumes that parties are unitary actors. Massive resignations signal that the party suffers from severe internal disagreements, which challenges this assumption. Coding the government as a new government following the departure of a sizeable number of MPs from a coalition party adjusts for high levels of intra-party factionalism. Thus, when the government loses its parliamentary strength significantly due to massive resignations from MPs who belong to a government party, it is coded as a new government. There is, however, only one instance in the quantitative dataset that falls into this category: 63 MPs from the Turkish Democratic Left Party (DSP) resigned in July 2002, during a DSP-led tripartite coalition in Turkey. The total seat share of the government decreased from 64 percent to 52 percent, and the DSP seats decreased from 136 to 73, making the party the smallest coalition partner.

Several quantitative and qualitative sources were used to build the government composition data according to the rules above. For the data on the seat shares of governments and parties, Parliament and Government Composition Database (Doering and Manow 2012), the International Foundation for Electoral Systems' ElectionGuide ([www.electionguide.org](http://www.electionguide.org)), Inter-Parliamentary Union's Database of National Parliaments ([www.ipu.org](http://www.ipu.org)), Norwegian Social Science Data Services ([www.nsd.uib.no](http://www.nsd.uib.no)), and the Italian Ministry of the Interior were used. These data were supplemented with an in-depth reading of the *Economist Intelligence Unit's* monthly reports on each of the 30 countries included in the analyses in order to locate the moments and reasons of government change. Table 3.1 tabulates by country the governments that are included in the analyses. It shows that some 136 governments served during this decade.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> However, given their time periods in office, some governments have no recorded events in the original King and Lowe (2003) data, such as Wolfgang Schuessel's caretaker government that served briefly between September 2002 and April 2003 or Mesut Yilmaz's caretaker government that served from November 1998 to November 1999. This not only stops one from treating the dataset as a balanced cross-sectional time-series, but decreases the actual number of governments that are used in the analyses to 136.

<i>Western Europe</i>		<i>Central and Eastern Europe</i>	
<i>Country</i>	<i>Number of Governments</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Number of Governments</i>
Austria	8	Albania	3
Belgium	5	Bulgaria	2
Denmark	5	Croatia	3
Finland	5	Czech Republic	4
Germany	4	Estonia	3
Greece	5	Hungary	3
Iceland	4	Latvia	6
Ireland	4	Lithuania	4
Italy	8	Macedonia	4
Luxembourg	4	Poland	6
Malta	5	Slovakia	5
Netherlands	5	Slovenia	4
Norway	5	Turkey	6
Portugal	4		
Spain	4		
Sweden	5		
United Kingdom	3		

Table 3.1 Number of Governments in the Dataset, by Country

Now that the governments are coded, three alternatives exist in the literature to dissect the variation among multi-party governments: using the number of parties or the parliamentary seat share of the government as a continuous measure, or borrowing the coalition typology from the Comparative Politics literature on coalition theory (Lijphart 1999) and using minority, minimum winning, and oversized (i.e. surplus majority) coalitions as the main categorical types. Using the coalition's parliamentary seat share to measure its strength is misleading in proportional representation contexts, where parties are more disciplined and ideologically coherent (Leblang and Chan 2003). As Chapter 2 has also discussed extensively with the example of the Wim Kok coalitions in the Netherlands between 1994 and 2002 (Table 2.1),

using this measure can obscure the mathematical contribution of each party in the government. Table 2.1 has also illustrated that neither does the number of parties in a government always capture if it is a majority government, or more importantly, whether it is able to survive party defections.

This dissertation therefore adopts the categorical grouping of coalitions instead of the other two approaches to unpack coalitions. To record the types of governments included in the analyses, the dissertation first and foremost defines *single-party governments* as including only one party in government. *Coalitions*, on the other hand, are defined as governments that include at least two political parties.

Parties that win joint seats in the elections are counted as single parties, such as the PRL-FDF in 1999 and the CD&V-NVA in 2006 in Belgium, or the Italian party, Rose in the Fist (RNP), which is in fact an alliance of RAD-SDI in 2006. Otherwise, parties that enjoy exclusive seats in the parliament are counted separately.<sup>26</sup> When coalitions include independent parliamentarians that do not necessarily belong to a political party, I count their seats toward the total number of seats the government has in the parliament, but these seats are not counted towards any political party. Furthermore, political parties that are not formally included in the government are not counted towards government composition, such as the Movimenta per la Autonomie (MpA) in Silvio Berlusconi's 2008 government, which supported the government while remaining outside its formal framework.<sup>27</sup>

The next categories are defined to unpack government types further. *Minority government* occupies 50 percent or less of the total seats in the parliament. *Single-party minority*

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<sup>26</sup> An example is the Christian Democratic Union – Christian Socialist Union (CDU/CSU) in Germany, where CDU and CSU win seats separately in the elections.

<sup>27</sup> In this sense, it can be argued that this project focuses on 'executive coalitions,' rather than 'legislative coalitions' (Laver and Budge 1992: 4).

governments include one party and enjoy 50 percent or less of the parliamentary seats. *Minority coalition* has 50 percent or less of the total number of seats in the parliament, but includes two or more political parties. If a coalition loses its parliamentary majority even when the smallest partner departs, it is defined as a *Minimum winning coalition*. In contrast, in *Oversized* coalitions there is at least one party in government without which the government can still maintain its parliamentary majority (Volden and Carrubba 2004).<sup>28</sup>

Table 3.2 reports the trends from the 136 governments that are used in the analyses. It shows that oversized coalitions, for instance, are not necessarily populated with several parties. There are oversized coalitions with two parties, such as the center-left MSZP-SZDSZ government in Hungary between 1994 and 1998, led by Gyula Horn. Similarly, several parties can join a coalition but fail to carry it towards parliamentary majority. A dramatic example is Massimo D'Alema's seven-party minority coalition in Italy, which had served for only four months between December 1999 and April 2000.

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<sup>28</sup> *Oversized* represents coalitions that have extra parties than necessary to reach a parliamentary majority. Thus, this study disagrees with previous research that defines most grand coalitions as oversized coalitions (Kaarbo 1996b). Grand coalitions might be "oversized" as they command an overwhelming majority (70-80% of the parliamentary seats). However, they are usually technically minimum winning coalitions, where the departure of any partner leads to the coalition's loss of parliamentary majority. Austria's ÖVP-SPÖ grand coalition is an example (Lijphart 1999).

No. of Parties in Government	Government Types				
	<i>Single-party Minority</i>	<i>Single-party Majority</i>	<i>Minority Coalition</i>	<i>Minimum Winning Coalition</i>	<i>Oversized Coalition</i>
1	x	x			
2			x	x	x
3			x	x	x
4			x	x	x
5				x	x
6					x
7			x		

Table 3.2 Government Types and Number of Parties

The main advantage of using the categories of coalitions builds precisely on these two points: not only do these categories capture whether a coalition holds parliamentary majority or not, but also whether the coalition is stable enough to survive defections with the help of the extra parties that cushion it. These categories are based not merely on the number of parties, but on how these parties contribute to the coalition's overall parliamentary strength and stability. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the utilization of the coalition typology does not preclude the "number of parties in government" approach in the literature. For instance, oversized coalitions, by definition, should include more parties than necessary compared to minimum winning coalitions. Indeed, the government composition data used in this dissertation show that the correlation coefficient for minimum winning coalitions and the number of parties is 0.18; whereas for oversized coalitions it is 0.41. On average, minimum winning coalitions have 2.7, and oversized coalitions have 3.9 parties.

Figure 3.1 shows how the 136 governments included in the analyses are distributed across these five government types. The graph shows that minimum winning coalitions dominate the European parliamentary scene in the 1994-2004 period.



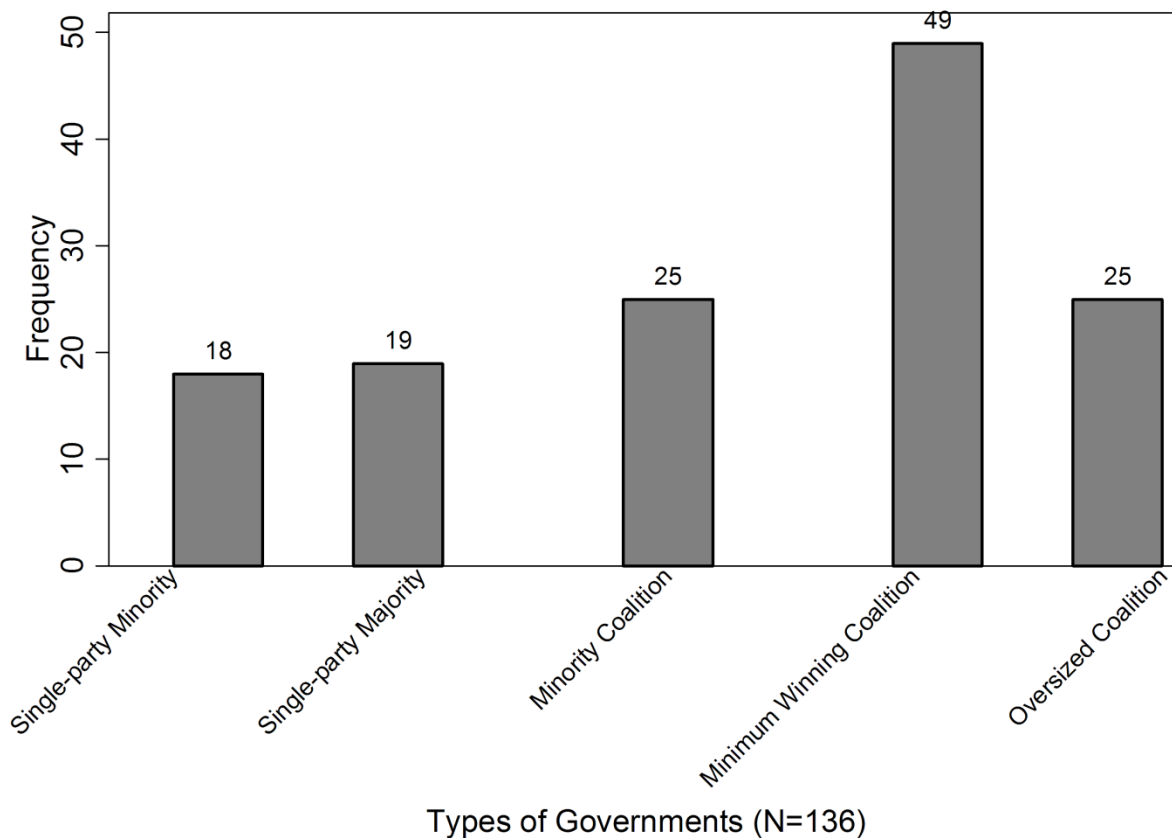


Figure 3.1 Types of Governments Included in the Analyses

## ii. *Policy Incongruence*

The second component of government composition concerns the extent of ideological disagreements inside the government. Ideological disagreements can be defined as those incompatibilities among the political parties of a government that arise from their policy positions. These disagreements can be of high or low degree, depending on the relative locations of the parties along the policy spectrum. To the extent that the parties are closer to each other, the resulting coalition will be ideologically compact, or connected (Axelrod 1970). Otherwise, the coalition will be ideologically loose. The diversity of ideological positions in a coalition is taken as a measure of *policy incongruence*, or how much ideological disagreement exists in a

government that might stop it from demonstrating committed foreign policy behavior. Alongside the types of government discussed above, the extent of policy incongruence among the governing parties constitutes the second major aspect of government composition in parliamentary democracies.

Before discussing how the policy incongruence of a government is operationalized and measured, however, two assumptions are in order. First, parties are assumed to be cohesive and disciplined, so that they do not suffer from intraparty factionalism. In other words, single-party governments are assumed to have no ideological disagreements. Second, this project assumes that the ideological positions of government parties reflect a good measure of their respective preferences in foreign policy. As such, Clare's views are echoed here (2010: 971), who also argues that "parties should take stances on foreign policy issues in general (...) that are consistent with their ideological positions." The expectation that follows this assumption is that to the extent that government parties come from distant ideological backgrounds, they will have more difficulty in finding a common ground to act committed at the international level.<sup>29</sup>

To measure policy incongruence in a government, first it is necessary to identify the ideological positions of government parties. To do this, their general left-right policy positions are utilized. Warwick (2011: 1677) contends that "although not all issue positions can be adequately captured by it, left-right position represents by far the best single measure of overall position." In other words, in line with the starting assumption above on party position and

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<sup>29</sup> In other words, this project is not concerned with whether and how the overall ideological *position* of a coalition leads to commitment. Previous studies certainly studied the level of belligerence in foreign policy behavior by focusing on the left-right policy positions of the coalitions (see Clare 2010, Palmer, London and Regan 2004), some of which have concluded that the left-oriented governments were less belligerent. The intention of this study is instead to demonstrate how the ideological differences inside a government translate into difficulties in reaching those behavioral outcomes that communicate international commitments.

foreign policy, this dissertation acknowledges that while the foreign policy positions of parties cannot be directly inferred from their overall left-right ideological positions, these values are the best available option that we have as researchers for discerning how far parties are located away from each other *in general* that might in turn lead to differences in their foreign policy preferences, which ultimately reach to the decision-making stage and influence how committed a behavior the government can pursue internationally.

Laver and Hunt (1992) describe three ways in which we can determine the issue positions of political parties: analyzing party documents, use of mass public opinion, or expert judgments (see also Ray 1999: 284).

This study will use data from a variety of expert judgment datasets to identify the left-right ideological positions of political parties, mainly for two reasons. First, using expert judgments in this study helps minimize the missing data problem. In contrast with the datasets that use party manifestos to infer party positions—a prominent example of which is the Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP) (Budge et al. 2001, Klingemann et al. 2006), some argue that expert judgments are more advantageous resources since party manifestos may not be available for smaller parties, which in turn exclude these parties from the dataset (Ray 1999: 284). Coalition governments, specifically oversized coalition governments, are supported with smaller parties against dissolution. These parties, however, may not be caught by the CMP radar. Examples include the Democratic Union for Integration party in Macedonia, which joined the government coalition led by Prime Minister Branko Sekerinska, following the elections in

September 2002.<sup>30</sup> The breadth of coverage, therefore, is a foremost advantage of using expert datasets for the purposes of this dissertation.

Second, expert judgments provide useful yardsticks that capture the general overview of party positions, rather than dissecting the manifestos by content analysis and then manipulating those analyses to create new variable constructs such as *External Relations*, which include rather irrelevant measures such as *Anti-Imperialism* or *Internationalism*. The decision to code a party with these terms, furthermore, is very much at the discretion of the coder who reads and analyzes the manifestos, notwithstanding his or her prior training. Scholars who use expert judgments, on the other hand, argue that “the great virtue of an expert survey is that it sets out to summarize the judgments of the *consensus* of experts on the matters at issue, and moreover to do so in a *systematic way*” (Benoit and Laver 2006: 9, emphasis in original).

Following the footsteps of the rich literature in Comparative Politics that use expert surveys (Castles and Mair 1984, Huber and Inglehart 1995, Laver and Hunt 1992), this dissertation uses three sets of expert survey data to measure the left-right ideological positions of government parties: (a) Hix and Lord’s (1997) survey,<sup>31</sup> which is also used by Ray (1999), as well as the (b) 1999-2007 iterations of the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) dataset (Hooghe et al. 2010, Steenbergen and Marks 2007); (c) and for those countries which were not included in either of these two data sources (such as Malta or Iceland), the data from Benoit and Laver (2006) are used. Following Hooghe et al. (2010), parties that assume less than 5 on the left-right scale are left-wing, and parties that assume 6 or more are right-wing parties. The CHES dataset

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<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, Marks et al. (2007) argue that “expert surveys are more consistent with the evaluations of voters and parliamentarians than data currently available from party manifestos,” thus making expert surveys a better measure of party positions in terms of reflecting the true locations of parties along the political spectrum.

<sup>31</sup> Since these data were included from Leonard Ray’s own dataset, I use Ray (1999) as its citation. Ray’s dataset is available at: <http://www.lsu.edu/faculty/lray2/data/data.html>

labels a party's policy position of 5 along the left-right [0-10] spectrum as 'the center' (Hooghe et al. 2010, Bakker et al. 2012).

These datasets are used together as they follow the same methodology, and tests for reliability and validity show that they provide similar information when compared to alternative data sources. In their article on the CHES dataset, the authors argue that "as was the case with his [Ray (1999)] data, our expert survey measures seem to capture essentially the same information about party positions as other measures such as the party manifestos" (Steenbergen and Marks 2007: 360). The analyses reported in Hooghe et al. (2010: 12) suggest that "the CHES survey produces information that is in line with alternative sources. There is a reasonable level of convergence between the CHES data and the manifesto coding data, a non-expert instrument, though the associations are lower than with expert surveys." In conclusion, the CHES data are reasonably reliable and valid on the ideological positioning of political parties when compared to other datasets such as the Comparative Manifesto Project, Benoit-Laver expert survey, and the Rohrschneider-Whitefield expert survey (Hooghe et al. 2010: 13). Moreover, the simultaneous use of these datasets reflects the change in party positions across time.

For Western European governments prior to the first iteration of the CHES expert survey in 1999, the left-right party positions data collected in 1996 by Ray (1999) were utilized. *For all other Western and Central and Eastern European governments after 1999*, the below procedure is executed. First whether or not the government came to power via elections is checked. If an election date is present for the government, *and if the country is included in the CHES datasets*, then the CHES iteration that is closest to the year of the elections is used. If the government came to power via either of the "new government" rules explained earlier in this chapter, then

the CHES iteration that is closest to the start year of the government is used. A similar practice is also adopted by Huber (1998).

The first iteration of CHES in 1999, however, has primarily focused on the most prominent Western European countries. For this reason, if a country is not included in the CHES coverage, such as Malta or Iceland, or other Central and Eastern European countries that were not covered until its 2002 iteration, the data source which was chronologically the closest to the election date or the government start date was utilized. For example, while both the Benoit and Laver (2006) and the 2006 CHES iteration include party positions for Estonia, the values from the former dataset are utilized here, since Benoit and Laver collected the data in 2003.<sup>32</sup>

*When there are electoral alliances or mergers among parties:* As explained earlier in this chapter, some parties enter elections together and win seats jointly, or they may merge to become a single party. For these instances, the policy positions of allied parties are averaged to yield a single left-right score.<sup>33</sup> If, however, the left-right position data exist only for one of the allied

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<sup>32</sup> Here I must acknowledge that unlike the Western European countries for which expert datasets get updated periodically to reflect any temporal changes in their policy positions, this practice is generally absent for many Central and Eastern European countries. For instance, the 2003 values from the Benoit and Laver (2006) dataset were used for all Estonian governments in this study, which began their terms in 1997, 1999, and 2003.

<sup>33</sup> For example, in Poland, the SLD-UP (Alliance of Democratic Left – Union of Labour) is an electoral alliance that ran together in elections, based on the *Economist Intelligence Unit's* December 2001 report on this country. Their policy position is coded as the average policy position of SLD and UP. Weighted averages (i.e. policy position of the new merger weighted by the seat share each party separately received in the previous election) were not used for this measure since it would have been misleading to assume that the seat shares parties had won in the previous election would directly affect the policy influence each party had in the merger, and that this proportionality would continue throughout the merger's lifetime. This is similar to the junior party influence in coalitions argued in the literature (Clare 2010): junior parties often have more influence in a coalition than their seat share in the parliament would predict.

parties (generally these alliances are made of two parties), then the left-right position of this party is used.<sup>34</sup>

Following the above coding procedures, three different measures are created in this dissertation, using the party position data explained above, to provide robustness to the analyses as well as to demonstrate the different conceptualizations of policy incongruence. The first measure is borrowed from Tsebelis (1999: 599), who calls it the *Ideological Range* and measures it by “taking the absolute value of the distance between the most extreme parties of a coalition.” The larger the absolute value, the larger the ideological range in the coalition, and thus the higher the level of policy incongruence.

Figure 3.2 provides a box-plot of this measure, summarizing how the ideological range values are distributed across the five government types. The top whiskers of each box on the figure indicate the upper quartile on the ideological range values, while the bottom whiskers indicate the lower quartile. The boxes represent the middle 50 per cent of the ideological range values, and the lines in the boxes represent the median, or the middle-point in the data. The length of a box indicates the spread of the values around the median. Longer boxes denote higher levels of spread.

The figure echoes the unitary party assumption by illustrating that ideological range is zero for single-party minority and majority governments. It also shows that oversized coalitions, and to a lesser extent, minority coalitions show significant diversity in their ideological compositions. On the contrary, the distribution of the ideological range values among minimum winning coalitions is much more compact and closer to zero given the location of the top and

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<sup>34</sup> An example is Lithuania, for which the left-right position of the TS (Homeland Union) is used to code for the TS-LK (Homeland Union-Lithuanian Christian Democrats) until the 2006 CHES dataset included this alliance in its coverage.

bottom whiskers, indicating a higher level of ideological connectedness, though there are still several noticeable outliers in this category, indicated by the dots.

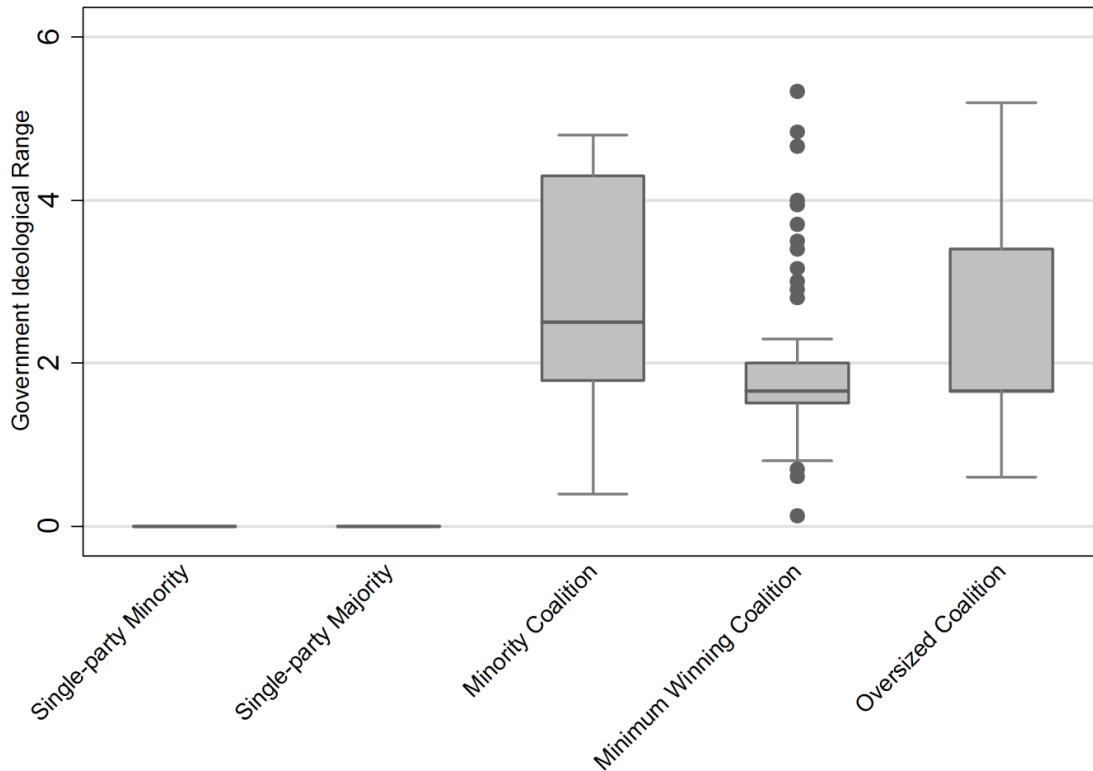


Figure 3.2 Ideological Range of Governments, Box-Plot

The downside of the ideological range measure, however, is its potential of overestimating policy differences. In a coalition of three or more parties, the ideological positions of some parties in government will inevitably fall between the two that define the government’s ideological range. These intermediary parties may dampen the ideological extremities in the coalition by building a bridge between the two extremes, which might turn the coalition into an ideologically less divided one than is measured by its ideological range.



A second measure, *Standard Deviation of Party Positions*, is created to take into account the possibility of overestimation.<sup>35</sup> This alternative measure uses the mean coalition left-right position and standardizes the distances of all parties in the coalition to this mean (Warwick 1992).<sup>36</sup> This measure is very highly correlated with *Ideological Range* ( $r=0.98$ ), as Warwick (1992) also explains, but has a much smaller variance (0.52) than the former (1.95). Figure 3.3 presents a similar box-plot for this measure.

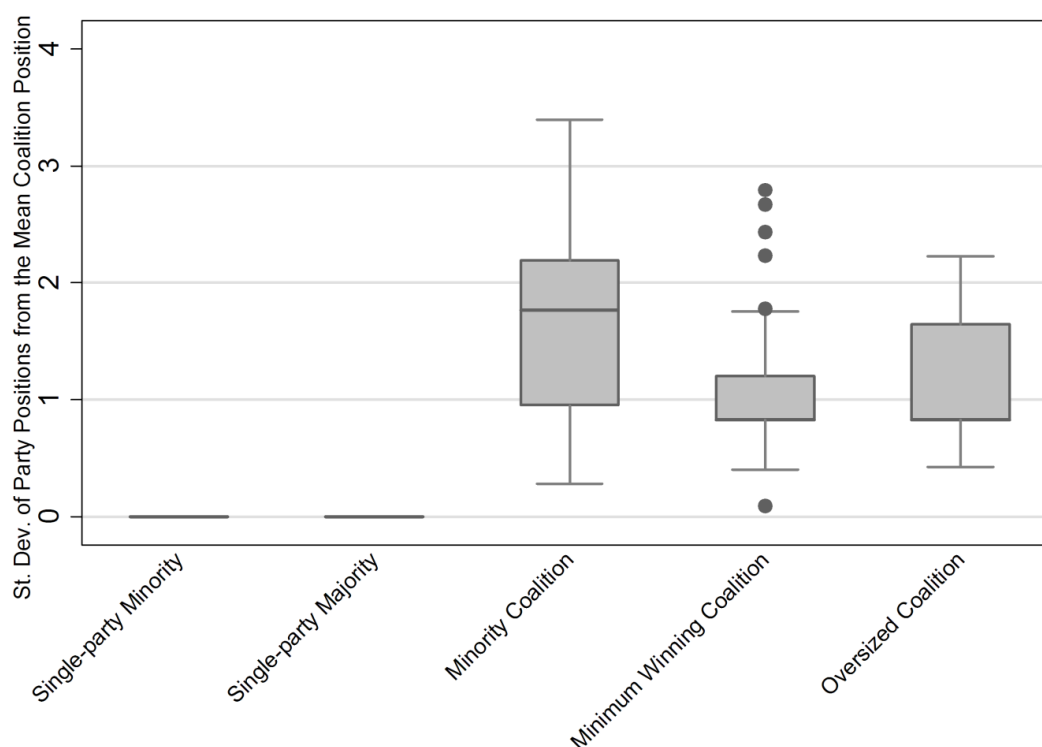


Figure 3.3 Standard Deviation of Party Positions in Governments, Box-Plot

<sup>35</sup> The standard deviation measure is constructed by using the following equation

$$\sqrt{\frac{1}{N-1} \sum_{i=1}^N (x_i - \bar{x})^2},$$

where  $i$  denotes the party and  $x$  denotes its left-right policy position.

<sup>36</sup> An alternative measure would be the weighted standard deviation of coalition parties. This measure, however, would assume that coalition position was defined proportional to each coalition party's parliamentary seat share. Since the dissertation is arguing that junior party policy influence in a coalition may not always be proportional to its size given a specific type of coalition (especially in minimum winning coalitions where each party is a veto player regardless of its size), an unweighted standard deviation measure is utilized instead.

Figure 3.3 shows again that minority coalitions have the greatest ideological diversity, whereas the level of ideological dispersion is noticeably lower for both minimum winning and oversized coalitions. Similar to Figure 3.2, this box-plot also shows that despite the tighter distribution of standard deviation values for minimum winning coalitions, there are still several outlier cases for this government type.

Finally, a third alternative measure looks beyond the continuous distance measured along the left-right spectrum and asks whether the coalition includes parties from the left as well as the right of the political spectrum. This measure is called *Center is Crossed*. The underlying motivation here is to see whether having parties in a government that are not just located away from each other on the *same* side of the political spectrum but actually come from the *opposite* sides affects the intensity of their international commitments. Indeed, it could be argued that ideological differences could seem big when the range or standard deviation measures are employed, but that they could be reconciled much more easily when parties come from the same side of the political spectrum than when they come from the opposite sides. In other words, this measure takes a more substantive approach in conceptualizing ideological disagreements. This last variable is measured on a categorical level. It assumes 1 if the coalition includes parties both from the political left and from the right, or includes the center party, and 0 otherwise. Figure 3.4 summarizes the distribution of governments over this categorical variable. It shows that 55 out of 136 governments cross the center of the political spectrum while 70 governments are composed of only left or right parties.

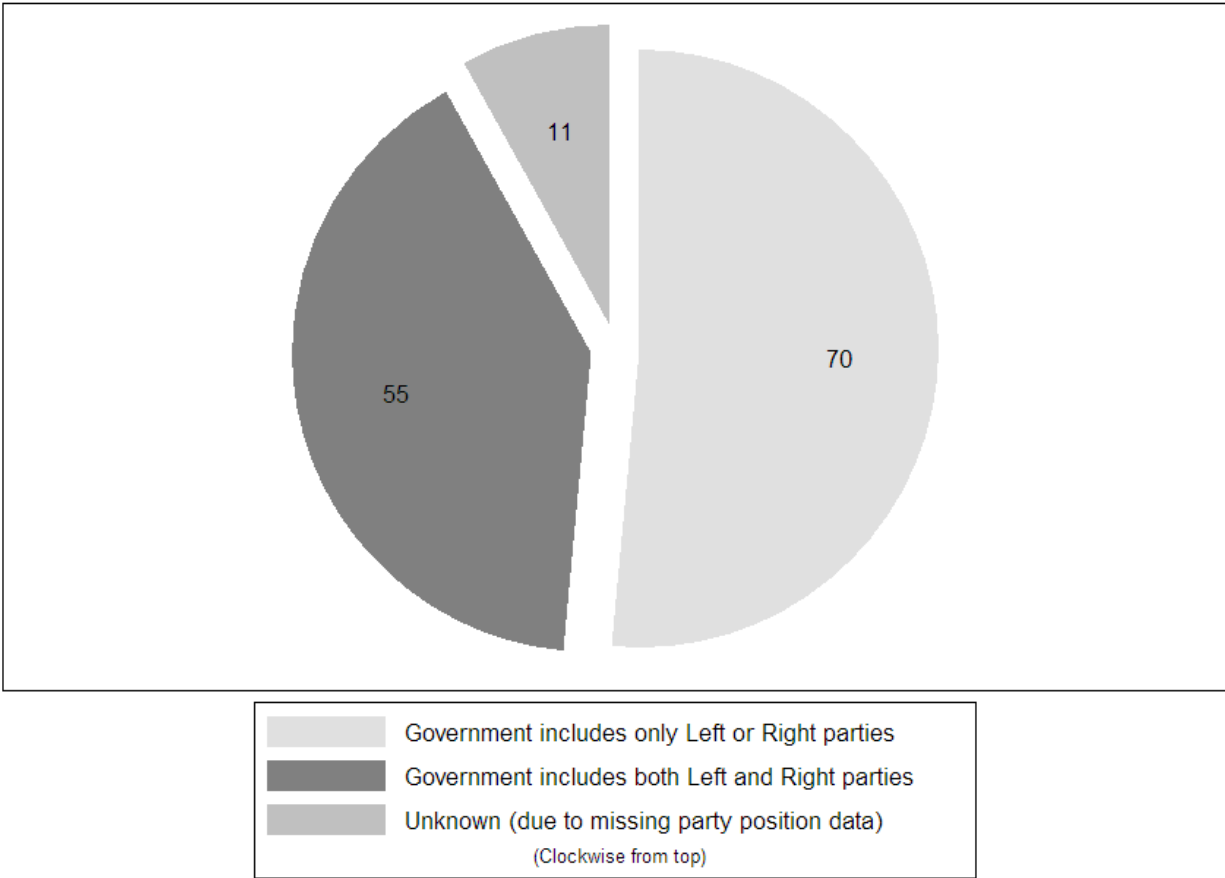


Figure 3.4 Governments Including Parties from the Left or the Right (*Center is Crossed*)

This section has provided a discussion of the operationalization and measurement of the key independent variables that will be used in both the quantitative and qualitative components of the dissertation. The next section turns to explain ‘foreign policy events’ and how they are used to construct the measure of the dependent variable, commitment intensity.

### Foreign Policy Events and Measuring Commitment

Chapter 1 has discussed in detail that this study takes foreign policy behavior as the unit of analysis and uses ‘foreign policy events’ as its operational equivalent. This section discusses

events and how the literature has utilized them to construct the scale of commitment, which is the dependent variable of this project.

Events in foreign policy specify “‘who does what to whom, and how’ in the relations among states” (Hudson and Vore 1995: 215, see also Schrodtt 1995). The notion of the event is so minimalist that an average consumer of international news gets exposed to them numerous times every day. Consider BBC News, for instance. Their headlines share a common format that capture all the information necessary for us to learn who did *what* to whom (and how): “Google *offers* clearer search labels,” “PKK *announces* Turkey withdrawal,” “Serbia’s President, Tomislav Nikolic, *has apologized* for all “crimes” committed by Serbs during the break-up of Yugoslavia, including Srebrenica.” These are the headlines or the very first sentences of the BBC newswires that I accessed from my phone on April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2013, all of which are examples of world events. Foreign policy events, too, are communicated in the same way: “UN *approves* peace force for Mali,” or “Hague [British foreign minister] *opens new embassy* in Somalia,” or “Israel says one of its fighter jets has *shot down* an unmanned aircraft sent from Lebanon into Israeli airspace” (BBC News 2013) are some examples.<sup>37</sup>

Clearly, the various formats in which foreign policy events are reported around the world necessitate a framework to categorize and group them for scientific inquiry. The foremost effort on this front belongs to Charles McClelland. The World Event/Interaction Survey (WEIS) (McClelland 1978: 1-2) that was compiled between 1966 and 1978 using *The New York Times* is not only the first and one of the most prominent events datasets that documents “the flow of

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<sup>37</sup> A single news sentence can include more than one event. In the events dataset that is used in this study, the first and second sentences of the news reports are recorded. If there are multiple events reported in these sentences, each of these events is coded as individual observations (VRA Documentation Manual 2003. Available at: <http://gking.harvard.edu/data>).

action and response between countries,” but it has also introduced the event types and categories that foreign policy analysis scholars continue to use to this day.

The 22 event types that McClelland (1978) has introduced with the WEIS dataset is introduced in Table 3.3. For instance, the following line from the WEIS data reads: “NIGERIA SUPPORTED UNK [United Kingdom] POLICY IN RHO [Rhodesia] AFFAIR,” which was recorded on January 11<sup>th</sup>, 1966 and coded with the event code 4, denoting *approval*. “ISR [Israel] TROOPS FIRED ON JOR [Jordan] TROOPS” is another record in the dataset, recorded on April 9<sup>th</sup>, 1969 with the code 22, indicating the *use of force*.

<i>Code</i>	<i>Event Type</i>
01	Yield
02	Comment
03	Consult
04	Approve
05	Promise
06	Grant
07	Reward
08	Agree
09	Request
10	Propose
11	Reject
12	Accuse
13	Protest
14	Deny
15	Demand
16	Warn
17	Threaten
18	Demonstrate
19	Reduce Relationship
20	Expel
21	Seize
22	Force

Table 3.3 WEIS Event Types

The event types listed in Table 3.3 above further branch out to yield 63 event categories. Appendix A provides these categories as reported in McClelland (1978: 5-13), with their event codes denoted in parentheses. As the quantitative research design that will be introduced further below will show, the event categories presented in Appendix A also form the basis of the categories of the observations that are coded in the large-N foreign policy events dataset (King and Lowe 2003) used in this dissertation. Furthermore, these event categories provide the conceptual framework for the measure of the dependent variable that this dissertation uses, to which we now turn.

### ***Measuring Commitment Intensity***

Chapter 1 has provided an extensive conceptual discussion of commitment and commitment intensity to establish the research puzzle that is raised in this dissertation as well as to situate the project within the existing debate in the literature. Certainly, empirical analysis ensues so long as the conceptual clarification of a variable is followed by decisions regarding its measurement, a key component of any research design, qualitative and quantitative alike. This section explains the ‘commitment intensity’ scale utilized for this dissertation to measure the dependent variable. A more extensive discussion of the previous scholarly attempts in the field to measure commitment is provided in Appendix B.

The present study uses the commitment scale developed by Goldstein (1992) to measure the dependent variable. A sophisticated and widely consulted (Fordham 2005, Goldstein and Pevehouse 1997, Kaarbo and Beasley 2008, King and Lowe 2003, Schrodtt and Gerner 2004) study on the rank-ordering of foreign policy actions, Goldstein (1992) utilizes the WEIS event types and categories to construct this measure. It extends from conflictual towards cooperative

behavior along a scale that ranges from -10 to +8.3. Table 3.4 provides the Goldstein (1992) scale.<sup>38</sup> Even though the scale applies equally to the quantitative and qualitative components of this dissertation, its quantified nature certainly benefits the quantitative component the most.

<i><b>Event Definition</b></i>	<i><b>Weight</b></i>
Military attack; clash; assault	-10.0
Seize position or possessions	-9.2
Nonmilitary destruction/injury	-8.7
Noninjury destructive action	-8.3
Armed force mobilization, exercise, display; military buildup	-7.6
Break diplomatic relations	-7.0
Threat with force specified	-7.0
Ultimatum; threat with negative sanction and time limit	-6.9
Threat with specific negative nonmilitary sanction	-5.8
Reduce or cut off aid or assistance; act to punish/deprive	-5.6
Nonmilitary demonstration, walk out on	-5.2
Order person or personnel out of country	-5.0
Expel organization or group	-4.9
Issue order or command, insist, demand compliance	-4.9
Threat without specific negative sanction stated	-4.4
Detain or arrest person(s)	-4.4
Reduce routine international activity; recall officials	-4.1
Refuse; oppose; refuse to allow	-4.0
Turn down proposal; reject protest, demand, threat	-4.0
Halt negotiation	-3.8
Denounce; denigrate; abuse	-3.4
Give warning	-3.0
Issue formal complaint or protest	-2.4
Charge; criticize; blame; disapprove	-2.2
Cancel or postpone planned event	-2.2
Make complaint (not formal)	-1.9
Grant asylum	-1.1
Deny an attributed policy, action, role or position	-1.1
Deny an accusation	-0.9
Comment on situation	-0.2
Urge or suggest action or policy	-0.1

<sup>38</sup> Modified from Goldstein, Joshua S. (1992). "A Conflict-Cooperation Scale for WEIS Events Data," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 36(2): 369-85.

<i>Event Definition (continued)</i>	<i>Weight</i>
Explicit decline to comment	-0.1
Request action; call for	-0.1
Explain or state policy; state future position	0.0
Ask for information	0.1
Surrender, yield to order, submit to arrest	0.6
Yield position; retreat; evacuate	0.6
Meet with; send note	1.0
Entreat; plead; appeal to; beg	1.2
Offer proposal	1.5
Express regret; apologize	1.8
Visit; go to	1.9
Release and/or return persons or property	1.9
Admit wrongdoing; apologize, retract statement	2.0
Give state invitation	2.5
Assure; reassure	2.8
Receive visit; host	2.8
Suspend sanctions; end punishment; call truce	2.9
Agree to future action or procedure, to meet, or to negotiate	3.0
Ask for policy assistance	3.4
Ask for material assistance	3.4
Praise, hail, applaud, extend condolences	3.4
Endorse other's policy or position; give verbal support	3.6
Promise other future support	4.5
Promise own policy support	4.5
Promise material support	5.2
Grant privilege; diplomatic recognition; de facto relations	5.4
Give other assistance	6.5
Make substantive agreement	6.5
Extend economic aid; give, buy, sell, loan, borrow	7.4
Extend military assistance	8.3

Table 3.4 Goldstein Commitment Scale

As Table 3.4 shows above, on this scale the most intense conflictual action is military attack (-10) or assault, and the most intense cooperative action is the extension of military



assistance (8.3). The absolute neutral<sup>39</sup> action is to “explain or state policy; state future position” to which zero is assigned on the scale. As one moves closer to zero on the scale from either end, the events become less action-oriented and more verbal, indicating low-intensity commitments. For example, *optimistic comment* gets a Goldstein score of 0.1, *proposal* gets 0.8, or *blame* gets a score of -2.2. These event categories clearly require less political/material commitment than *military mobilization* (-7.6) or *extending humanitarian aid* (7.6). Similarly, as one goes from less to more intense cooperative commitments the events include “offer proposal” (1.5), “suspend sanctions; end punishment; call truce” (2.9), “ask for material assistance” (3.4), “promise material support” (5.2) or “make substantive agreement” (6.5) (Goldstein, 1992: 376).

For example, an observation in the WEIS dataset states that the US and Southern Vietnam signed an agreement in 1966 permitting television broadcasting in English and Vietnamese. On the Goldstein scale this is a *substantive agreement*, which gets a score of 6.5. Similarly, again in 1966, Belgium and the Netherlands “gave indication that they were unready to yield to French demands for curbing integration of European Common Market,” which was coded as *turn down proposal* in the WEIS dataset, and receives a score of -4.0 on the Goldstein scale, indicating the conflictual nature of this rather low-intensity commitment in Dutch and Belgian foreign policy behavior.

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<sup>39</sup> Neutrality here indicates a lack of pledge or resource commitment as opposed to “neutrality” as a type of foreign policy. Neutrality as a foreign policy in states such as Sweden, Austria, and Finland can well be discussed in the framework of high-intensity commitments. For example, a news story that reads “Sweden *refuses* to cooperate with NATO” would reflect how Swedish foreign policy is committed *not* to align militarily. Indeed, some scholars choose to label these countries as “militarily non-aligned” rather than “neutral” (Ferreira-Pereira 2006: 101), which helps avoid this conceptual confusion. From a normative perspective, however, neutrality principle in foreign policy has also been criticized as indicating “a lack of commitment,” or as “escaping from responsibility” (Moller and Bjereld 2010: 366). In this study, foreign policy behaviors will be defined as neutral if they are low on commitment intensity, while keeping in mind that foreign policies such as “military neutrality” do not necessarily mean low-commitment policies.

The above discussion has presented the operationalization and the measurements of the independent and dependent variables that will be utilized in both the quantitative and qualitative analyses of this dissertation. Moving forward, the next section introduces the quantitative research design component of the project.

## **A Quantitative Approach to Studying Commitment Intensity in European Governments:**

### *(a) The Data:*

The preceding discussions in this chapter on the unit of analysis and the measurement of the dependent variable have alluded to the prevalent use of large-N events datasets in the study of foreign policy analysis. The quantitative component of the dissertation, too, will utilize a foreign policy events dataset to explain the independent and interactive effects of government composition variables on commitment intensity in post-Cold War European parliamentary democracies.

Why use events datasets in the study of foreign policy? Through the utilization of news reports<sup>40</sup> that communicate a great variety of events such as Tables 3.3 and 3.4 have shown earlier, the biggest advantage of events datasets is their ability to capture more than just the high-end conflict behavior such as the widely used Militarized Interstate Disputes (MID) dataset (Ghosn, Palmer and Bremer 2004). Indeed, events datasets include behaviors that actually take place far more frequently such as official visits to foreign countries, condemnations of

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<sup>40</sup> These datasets are generated by disaggregating news reports such as those exemplified above into their three major components—actor (source of action), action, and target (recipient of action) to explicate behavior. Several projects in the past have used news repositories such as *The New York Times* as exemplified by the WEIS dataset (McClelland 1978) as well as *Reuters* (King and Lowe 2003; Schrodt and Gerner 2004), or alternatively, combined multiple news sources (Azar 1980) to generate events datasets. For an in-depth account of events datasets in the study of foreign policy see Schrodt (1995).

wrongdoings by other state or non-state actors, apologies for past behavior to foreign counterparts and so forth, *alongside* the more high-profile behaviors such as granting of aids, troop deployments, military attacks, or signing and ratification of agreements. In sum, the determinants of international relations can be assessed not only more realistically but more effectively by utilizing events datasets, which contain not just the dramatic (but far less frequent) episodes such as acts of violence but those low-profile engagements that take place among dyads or between states and other international actors on a daily basis.

Well-known and widely used events datasets abound in the literature, such as the WEIS (McClelland 1978), COPDAB (Azar 1980), or CREON (Hermann, East, Hermann, Salmore and Salmore 1973), which focus on the foreign policy events and interactions among states. As mentioned earlier, however, one of the main objectives of this dissertation is to move the analysis outside the scope of the international systemic balance of power of the Cold War period so that the results are not biased by its influence. That neither of these datasets extends beyond 1990 is therefore a temporal limitation, which obliges me to look elsewhere.<sup>41</sup>

The dataset that is used for the quantitative component of this dissertation, Gary King and Will Lowe's *10 Million International Dyadic Events*<sup>42</sup> dataset (2003) is thus the perfect fit as it focuses on entirely post-Cold War international events by covering the period between 1990 and 2004. Furthermore, from a practical viewpoint, the dataset builds on the categorizations presented in Table 3.3 and Appendix A, which not only allows for methodological affinity with the existing studies that use the WEIS dataset (Kaarbo and Beasley 2008, Kaarbo 2012) but it

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<sup>41</sup> The WEIS data has recently been updated to cover events up until 1996, though the new version has not yet been released for public use. Even if it were, however, running a statistical analysis of government composition on pre- and post-Cold War events would have been theoretically misleading despite the use of simple variables such as a Cold War dummy.

<sup>42</sup> For a more detailed explanation of how the authors collected, machine-coded, and categorized the data see King and Lowe (2003).

also facilitates the mapping of the Goldstein commitment intensity scale onto the foreign policy events that are reported in the data.

The *10 Million* dataset even extends the 63-category scheme of the WEIS dataset to 157 in order to introduce more nuance to the existing categories, referred to as the ‘IDEA’ categories, which “are intended to be congruent with preexisting WEIS categories” (King and Lowe 2003: 621). To illustrate this, Table 3.5 shows how the WEIS cues were parsed out to create the IDEA categories by looking at the WEIS event code 06 as an example. Notice that the first two digits of each IDEA code from the left correspond to the WEIS cue category 06, listed in Table 3.3 as *Grant*.

<i>IDEA</i>	<i>Definition</i>
06	Grant
066	Release or return
065	Ease sanctions
0655	Relax curfew
0654	Demobilize armed forces
0653	Relax administrative sanction
0652	Relax censorship
0651	Observe truce
0632	Evacuate victims
064	Improve relations
063	Provide shelter
0631	Grant asylum
062	Extend invitation

Table 3.5 WEIS-to-IDEA Categories<sup>43</sup>

Though the data originally include millions of news events collected from *Reuters* that cover the period from 1990 to 2004 for a wide range of topics including sports and natural

<sup>43</sup> Modified from King, G. and W. Lowe. (2003) “An Automated Information Extraction Tool For International Conflict Data with Performance as Good as Human Coders: A Rare Events Evaluation Design,” *International Organization* 57: 617-642.

disasters, for the purposes of the dissertation, they were narrowed down to include only those events where the actors (initiators) are government agents or the national executives. This decision makes the substantive coverage of the dataset consistent with the definition of foreign policy and foreign policy behavior, presented in Chapter 1.<sup>44</sup>

The *10 Million* dataset originally includes not only countries from around the world but other international actors such as the Arab Cooperation Council, European Free Trade Association, or the Islamic Development Bank, even the “world community.” Per the institutional, spatial and temporal boundaries of the study that were discussed previously in the dissertation, the present dataset now includes all foreign policy events that were recorded for 30 Western and Central/Eastern European countries with parliamentary systems.<sup>45</sup>

Finally, in order to ascertain the democratic character of the Central and Eastern European countries, the time period was front-censored so that the dataset starts from 1994 instead of 1990. The assumption here is that democracies in transition show greater promise towards consolidation as long as the first round of post-transition elections is completed with a peaceful transfer of power from one incumbent to the next.<sup>46</sup> For the post-Communist

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<sup>44</sup> In the original dataset, the actors of the source country are coded as <NEXE> for National Executive and <GAGE> for Government Officials, respectively (King and Lowe 2003).

<sup>45</sup> Switzerland is not included in the dataset since the executive branch in this country is structured differently than the other parliamentary systems in Europe, where the federal government is a seven-member executive (Swiss Confederation, 2014). Croatia switched from presidential to parliamentary system in 2000, so the data for this country begin in 2000.

<sup>46</sup> This assumption is based on the literature on democratic transition and consolidation, specifically regarding turnover. An example is Huntington’s (1991: 266) “two-turnover test,” which argues that democracies are consolidated where “the government loses an election to the opposition and the successor government subsequently loses” (Schneider 1995: 220). Furthermore, Linz and Stepan (1996: 56) emphasize “pacts,” which “may explicitly entail some nondemocratic constraints for a short period of time before and after the first foundational election.” Therefore, even though the *10 Million* events dataset begins from 1990, the data for this study begins from 1994 as it considers such potential democratic deficits during the transition phase, in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War.

parliamentary regimes in Europe, this assumption called for the exclusion of their very first post-Soviet democratic governments from the dataset.

As a result, the events dataset that will be used in the quantitative component of this project utilize a total of 17,149 foreign policy events that were initiated by the government officials or national executives of the 30 European states with parliamentary systems over a decade between 1994 and 2004. The distribution of events over countries is presented in Figure 3.5 below. The figure shows that events from Germany, the United Kingdom, and to some extent, Italy, dominate the dataset. The numbers suggest that the media sources from which the events data are generated focus on the major European countries far more than they do on the smaller ones. The media bias, in other words, results in an unbalanced dataset and requires special statistical procedures to prevent further bias at the analysis stage. These procedures will be discussed further below.

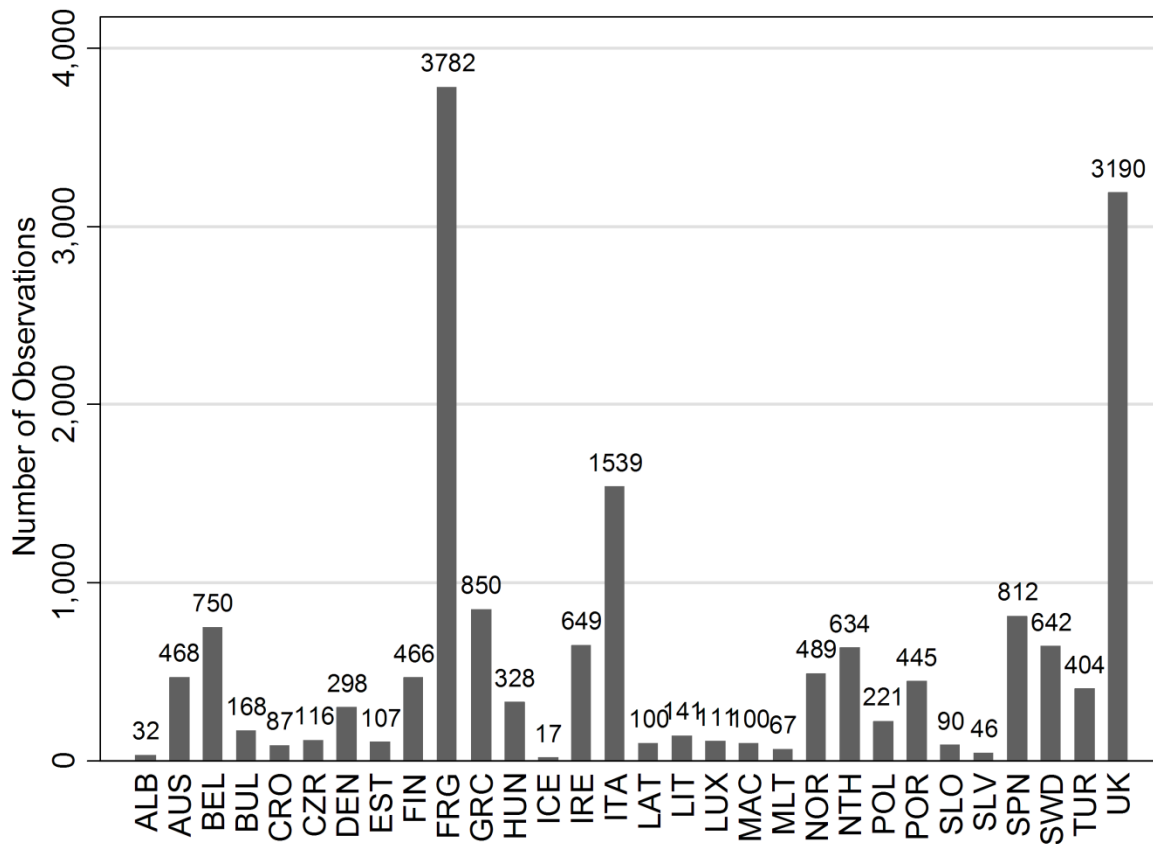


Figure 3.5 Distribution of Events over Countries<sup>47</sup>

Figures 3.6, 3.7 and 3.8 further illustrate the frequencies of foreign policy event categories in the dataset. First, Figure 3.6 below displays which event categories occur between ten to 50 times in the data. The bar graph shows that some of the most dramatic incidents that International Relations scholars are interested in, such as military assistance, agreement

<sup>47</sup> ALB: Albania, AUS: Austria, BEL: Belgium, BUL: Bulgaria. CRO: Croatia, CZR: Czech Republic, DEN: Denmark, EST: Estonia, FIN: Finland, FRG: (Federal Republic of) Germany, GRC: Greece, HUN: Hungary, ICE: Iceland, IRE: Ireland, ITA: Italy, LAT: Latvia, LIT: Lithuania, LUX: Luxembourg, MAC: Macedonia, MLT: Malta, NOR: Norway, NTH: Netherlands, POL: Poland, POR: Portugal, SLO: Slovenia, SLV: Slovakia, SPN: Spain, SWD: Sweden, TUR: Turkey, UK: United Kingdom.

ratifications, sanctions and threats only make up a tiny fraction of events that take place at the international level.

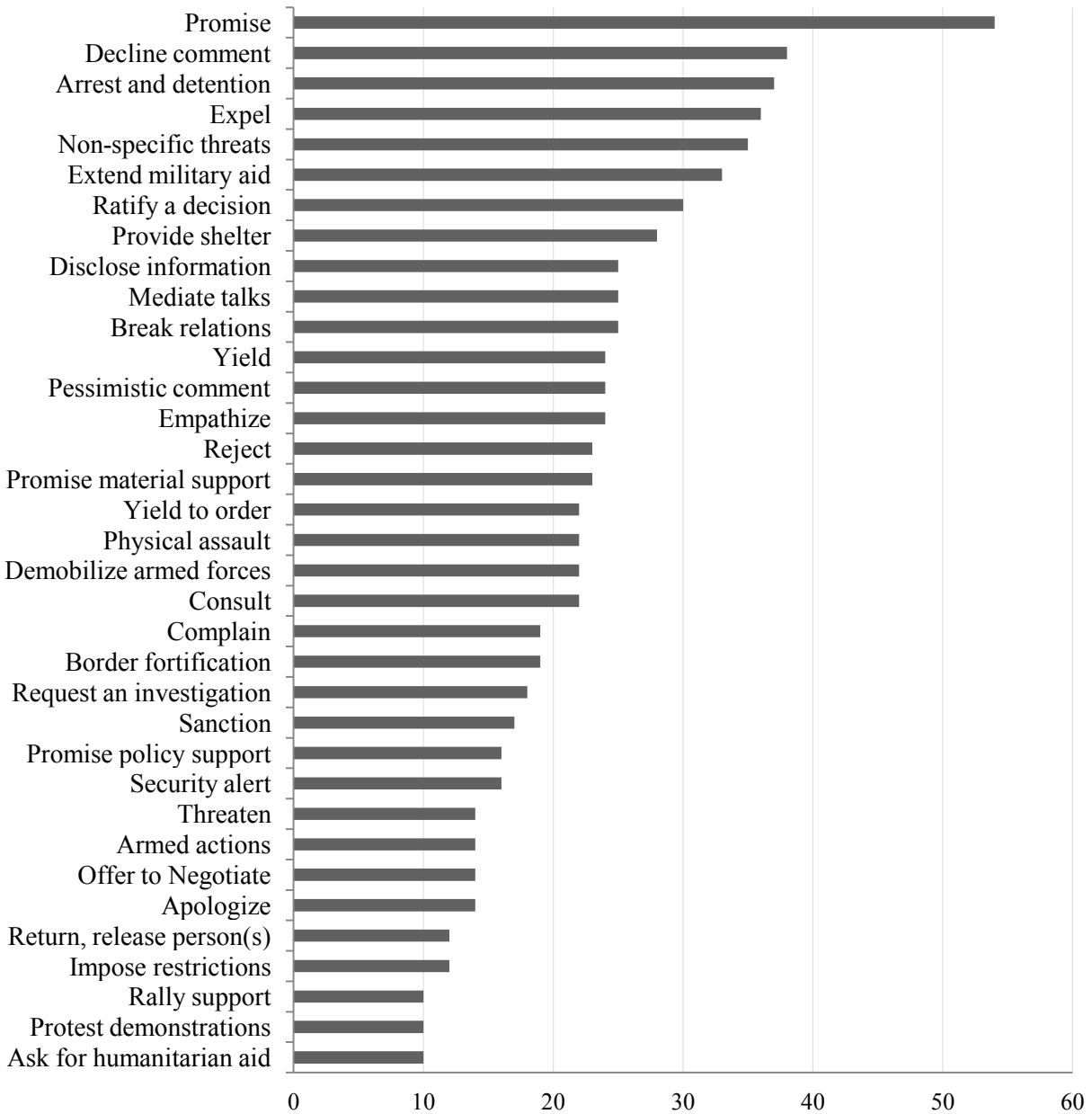


Figure 3.6 Event categories that are observed 10-50 times in the dataset



Figures 3.7 and 3.8 respectively report the event categories that occur between 500 and 1000 times; and between 1000 and 2000 times in the dataset. The graphs indicate that less dramatic international events such as criticisms or praises directed at other international actors or visits to other states occur far more frequently than attacks, threats or military assistance, though they are much less frequently studied in International Relations research.

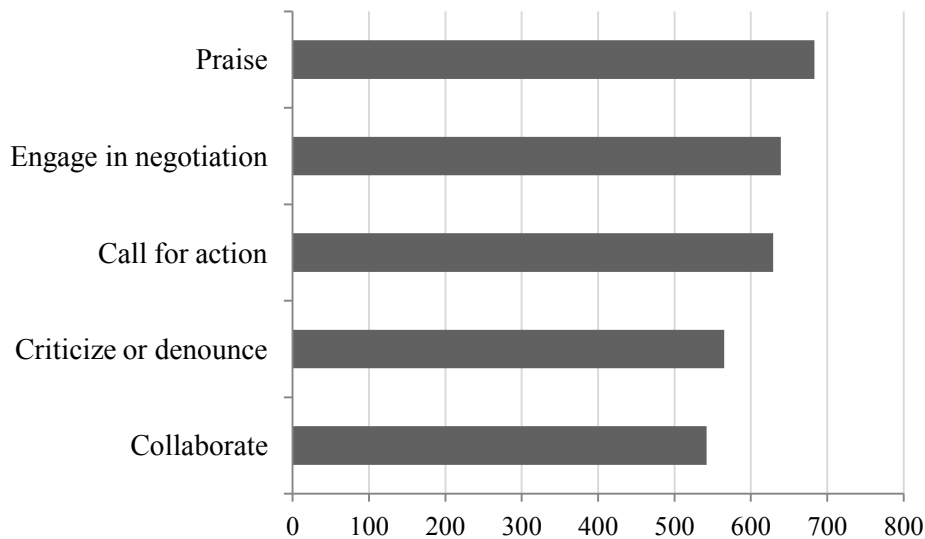


Figure 3.7 Event categories that are observed 500-1000 times in the dataset

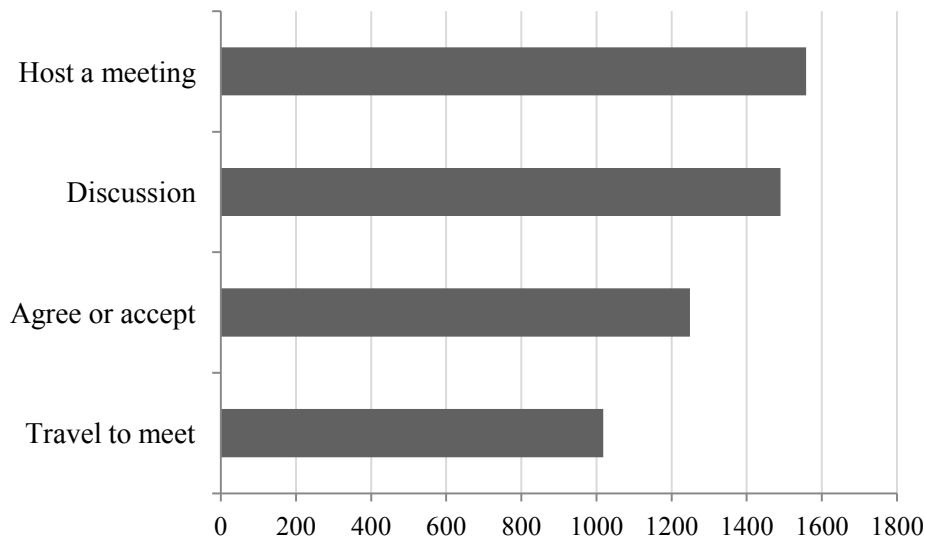


Figure 3.8 Event categories that are observed 1000-2000 times in the dataset

In sum, the graphs provided above suggest that the international relations among states and various other actors are not nearly as dramatic and sensational as it is reflected in the scholarship. What we most often study in IR as the dependent variables are “rare events” (King and Zheng 2001) and therefore, do not reflect the plethora of the more ordinary, daily interactions that take place. Furthermore, the “rare events” are often oriented towards confrontation and conflict, whereas Figures 3.6, 3.7 and 3.8 above suggest that most international events are not at all associated with conflict. The dataset utilized for the quantitative analysis therefore covers the dramatic and extraordinary events *as well as* the more ordinary, mundane, everyday events, most of which are indeed what we read in the news every day and what takes place at the international level. As such, the explanatory power of the coalition foreign policy framework introduced here reaches beyond international conflict and other dramatic relations among actors at the international level. The complete list of the event categories that are observed in the dataset are presented in Appendix C.

***(b) Dependent Variable:***

The dependent variable for the quantitative component of the dissertation is the Goldstein (1992) commitment intensity scale, introduced earlier. Since the quantitative analyses will be interested in the intensity of commitments regardless of their policy content, the scale is folded in the middle and a new scale is therefore generated that goes from 0 to 10, where 10 indicates the event that signals the most intense cooperative or conflictual commitment. This practice follows an earlier work by Kaarbo and Beasley (2008) and therefore maintains methodological affinity with their analyses. Figure 3.9 presents the frequency distribution of observations in the dataset along the folded Goldstein scale. The new IDEA event categories that King and Lowe (2003)

have introduced to the data have led to the creation of new values on the Goldstein scale.<sup>48</sup> Appendix C provides the list of all events included in the data with their corresponding Goldstein scores.

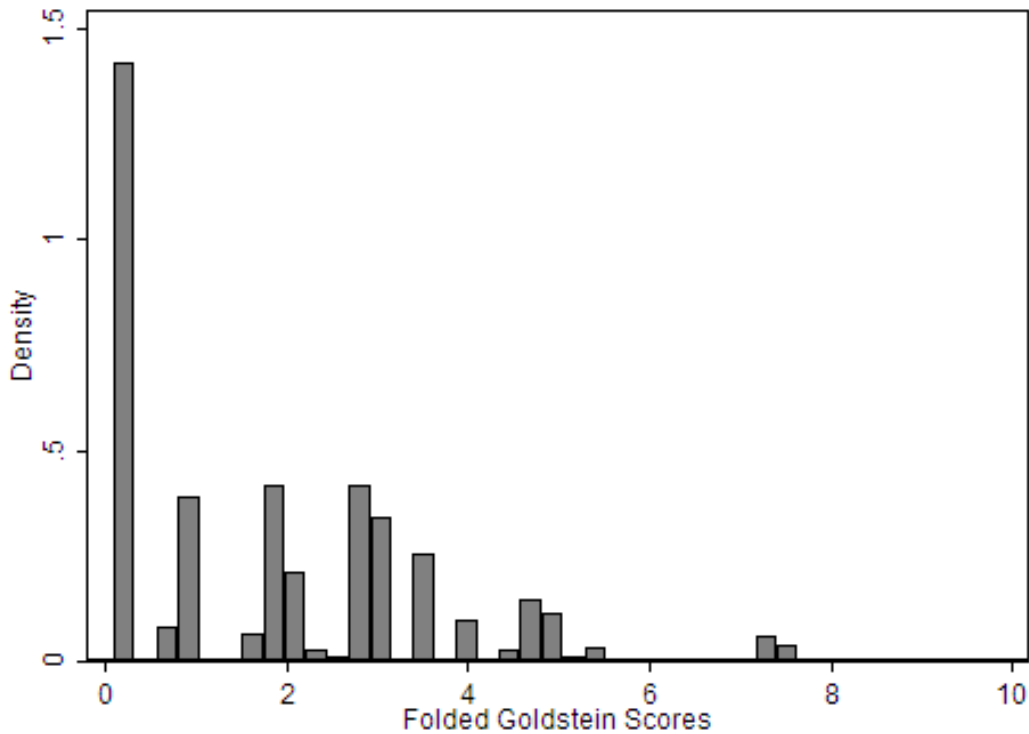


Figure 3.9 Frequency of Events by Folded Goldstein Scores<sup>49</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Although King and Lowe (2003) introduce many additional event categories as exemplified earlier in Table 3.2, those still stem from the original WEIS scheme and build upon Goldstein’s categorization. For the perfect matches, the values presented in Goldstein (1992: 376-377) are assigned. For the additional event categories that King and Lowe (2003) introduce, however, the authors’ Documentation Manual advises to “take the average score for the events within that cue” (VRA Documentation Manual 2003, p. 10. Available at: <http://gking.harvard.edu/data>). Example: For the event category 2239, the manual advises to average the values of all events in the Goldstein scale that belong to the WEIS cue category 22. I followed this procedure for all new event categories in the dataset that were not captured by the categories in the Goldstein scale.

<sup>49</sup> The event categories that correspond to each of these values cannot be reported here since these are the results from the folded scale and some event categories assume the same Goldstein

*(c) Independent Variables:*

**a. Government Types:**

As one of the key components of the ‘government composition’ explanation, the first set of independent variables used in the quantitative analysis includes government types. These types include single-party minority, single-party majority and multi-party governments, as well as the types of these multiparty governments. These include minority, minimum winning, and oversized coalitions. Dummy variables are generated for each of these categories.

Figure 3.10 below shows the distribution of governments and foreign policy events across these government types, and Figure 3.11 displays the densities of these government types across the countries included in the dataset.

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values. In addition, some event categories are already averaged by using the procedure explained in fn. 48.

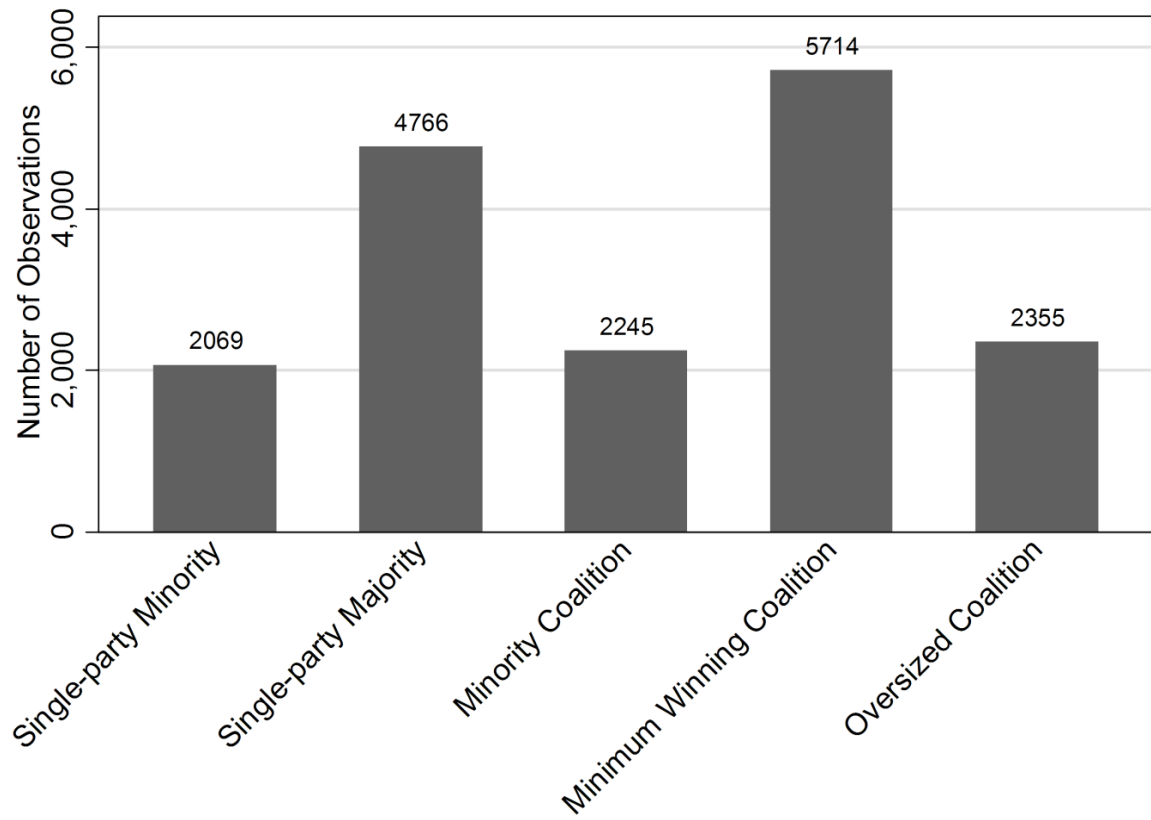


Figure 3.10 Number of Observations, by Government Type

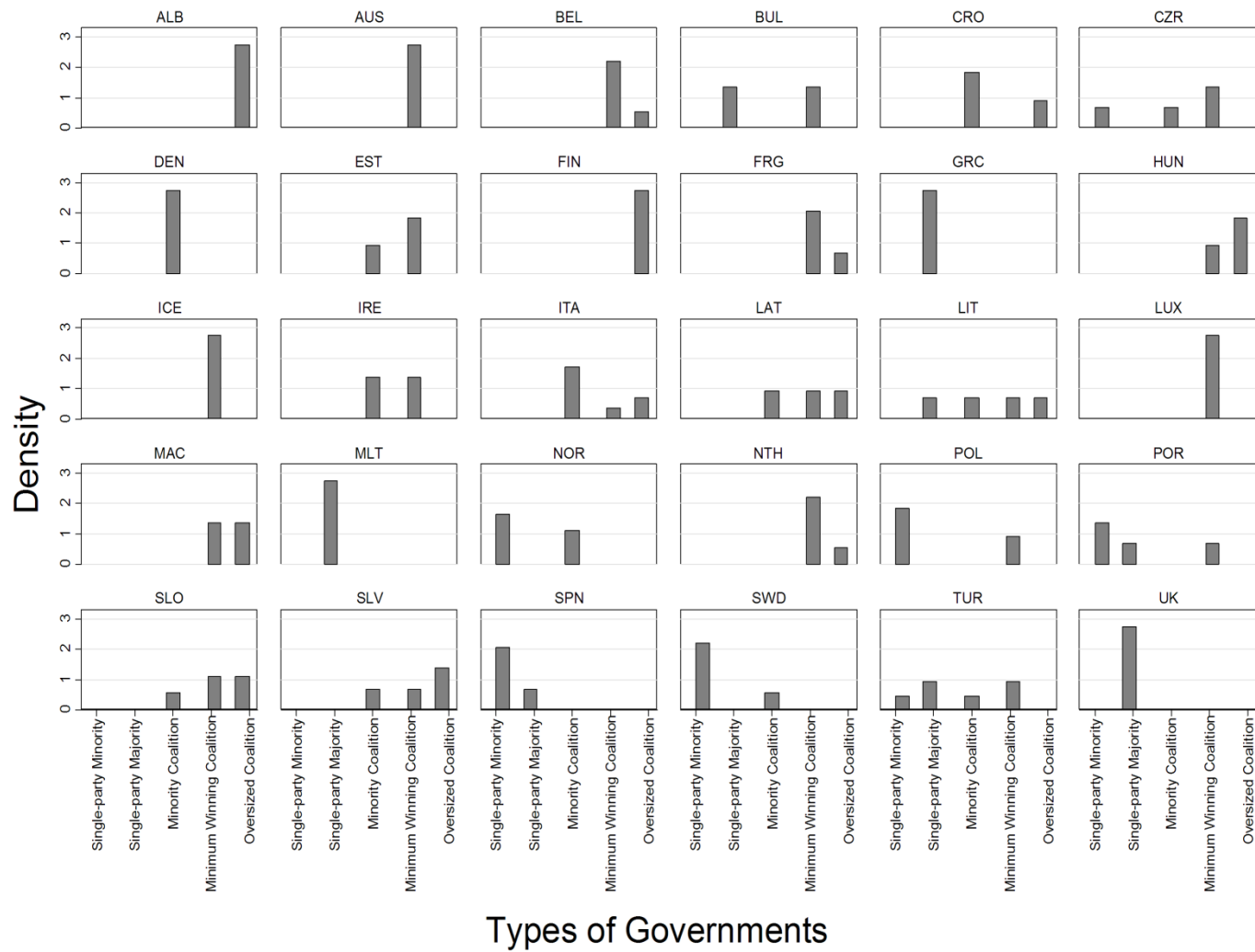


Figure 3.11 Frequency Density of Government Types by Country

### **b. Policy Incongruence:**

The second set of independent variables concerns the degree of ideological disagreements among parties in government, or the *policy incongruence* of the government, as discussed extensively earlier in this chapter. These variables include *ideological range*, *standard deviation (of the coalition parties from the mean left-right position of the coalition)* and *center is crossed*. The *range* and the *standard deviation* measures are continuous while the *center is crossed* measure is categorical. Each of these variables will be incorporated in the regression models to test their independent and interactive effects on commitment intensity.<sup>50</sup>

### **(d) Control Variables:**

Several control variables are used in the quantitative component of the dissertation to account for country- and context-specific factors that might help explain commitment intensity in foreign policy behavior.

First, from a realist International Relations perspective, it is important to acknowledge that the extent of a country's material resources might have an impact on the international behavior of its government (Trachtenberg 2003). It is also meaningful to expect that a government's room for maneuver in international politics is greater when the state enjoys more capabilities. In return, governments that enjoy greater resources at their disposal might have a tendency to act more committed at the international level. To account for this hypothesis,

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<sup>50</sup> The first two measures of policy incongruence are coded missing if there is no policy position value for at least one party in the government. The third measure is coded missing if there is at least one party in the government without a known policy position, without which it is impossible to decide whether the coalition crosses the center or not. In other words, if there are at least two parties from the opposite sides of the political spectrum in a coalition, then that coalition assumes 1 for the *center is crossed* variable, even if other coalition partners' positions are unknown. The models that use the *center is crossed* variable in Chapter 4 thus result in fewer missing cases.

following the quantitative literature on international behavior of states (Fordham and Walker 2005; Morgan and Palmer 2000) the scores from the Composite Index of National Capabilities (CINC) (Singer, Bremer and Stuckey 1972, Singer 1987) dataset are used to account for a state's capabilities.<sup>51</sup> Figure 3.12 displays the mean CINC score of the European countries between 1994 and 2004.

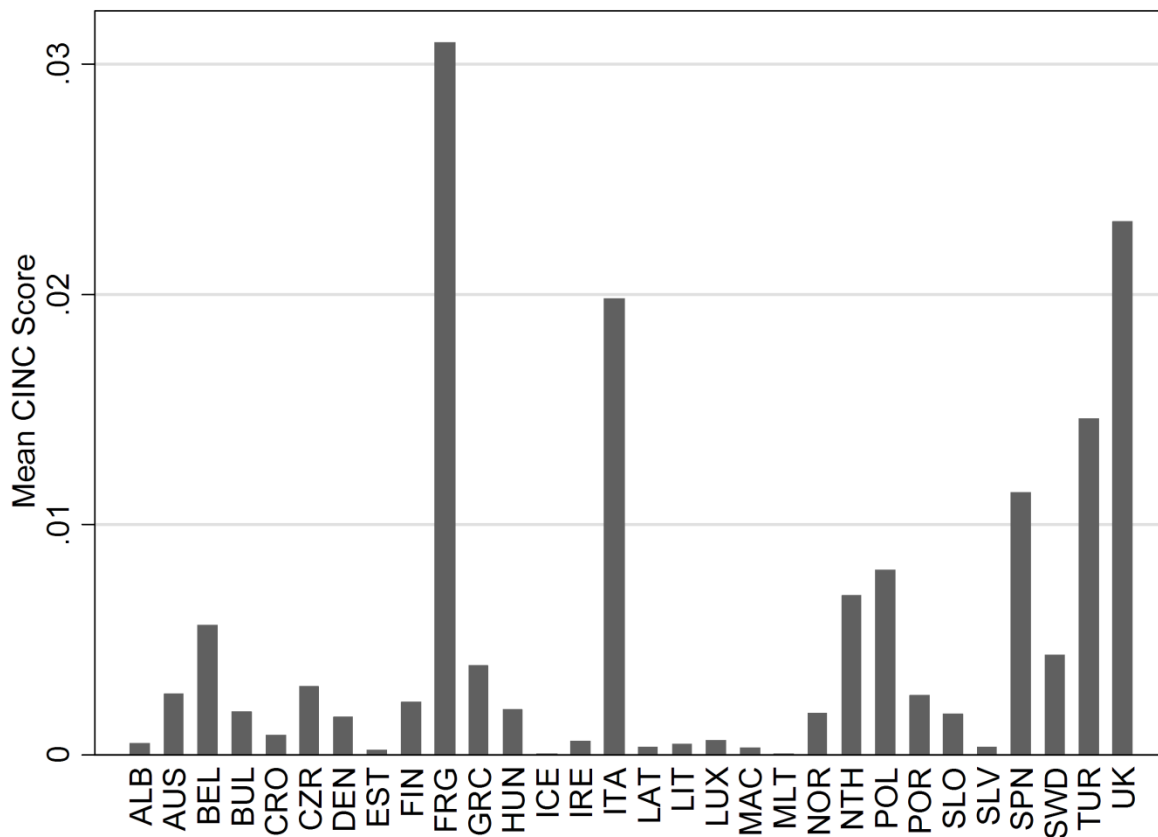


Figure 3.12 Mean CINC Scores of European Countries, 1994-2004

<sup>51</sup> CINC is calculated by adding together the six major components of material capabilities, namely total population, urban population, military personnel, military expenditures, primary energy consumption, and iron and steel production for all states for a given year (Singer, Bremer, and Stuckey 1972, Singer 1987), and is standardized by “converting each state's absolute component to a share of the international system, and then averaging across the six components” (Fordham and Walker 2005: 149). Since CINC is measured at every year for a given state, the CINC score of the state may change across time during the 1994-2004 period. The present dataset is coded so that each observation has a CINC score that belongs to the actor country at the year in which the event took place.



Second, it is reasonable to expect that the European democracies included in the dataset will behave differently when interacting with democracies than they will with non-democracies, as theorized by the democratic peace research (Owen 1994, Russett 1993). Democracy scores of target countries are coded by using the Polity IV data set (Marshall, Jaggers and Gurr 2011). Following Kaarbo (2012), they are recoded into a dummy variable that assumes 1 for all target country regimes that score 7 and above, and 0 otherwise. Foreign targets that are not states but international organizations, such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE); geographic regions; or states which are not assigned a Polity score, such as Palestine or Vatican City, are coded as missing for this binary variable, as well as they are for the CINC variable. The data show that the foreign policy events whose targets were democracies in this period are more than twice as frequent as nondemocratic targets in this period, as illustrated in Figure 3.13.

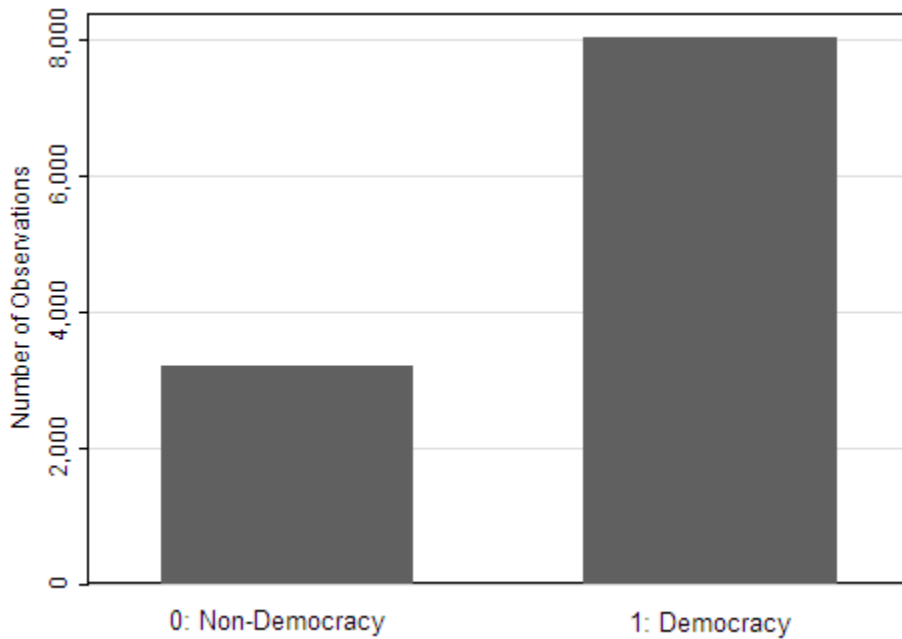


Figure 3.13 Frequency of Democratic Targets

In addition to these control variables which are frequently employed in similar studies in the literature, particularly those on the domestic-level causes of international conflict, this dissertation introduces a new set of control variables that account for memberships in international organizations as well as major international crises that took place in this period. In line with the major premise of the multi-method research design presented in this chapter, these additional control variables help account for the international context within which these events took place. The next few pages discuss these additional, context-oriented control variables.

First, the quantitative analyses control for the effect of European Union membership. A flourishing discussion in European Union studies concerns the extent to which the Union can influence national foreign policies through a mechanism called “Europeanization,” defined as “a set of regional, economic, institutional, and ideational forces for change also affecting national policies, practices, and politics” (Schmidt 2002: 41). The implication of Europeanization for foreign policy analysis is that as the EU became a more proactive economic and political actor throughout the post-Cold War period, its foreign policy actor capacity or ‘actorness’ (Groenleer and Van Schaik 2007, Jupille and Caporaso 1998, for a conceptual discussion of the term see Ginsberg 1999) has become more relevant for the member states, possibly leading to a greater influence on national foreign policy formation and consequently, behavior.

More recently, studies began to question whether the relationship between EU foreign policy and national foreign policies is interactive, so that nationally formulated preferences can be transferred to the EU-level and, through socialization, can further influence national foreign policy formation into the future (Groenleer and Van Schaik 2007, Wong and Hill 2010). For instance, in their comparative case study, Groenleer and Van Schaik (2007: 989) demonstrate that once the national preferences were initially converged (i.e. national foreign policies share

similar outlooks), “member state representatives appear to have been “socialized” by the interaction during the frequent meetings taking place in Brussels and the EU co-ordination meetings at international conferences.” This has led to the ratification of the Rome Statute that established the International Criminal Court and a common EU position during the negotiations in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) concerning the Kyoto Protocol.

If socialization as a mechanism is a function of the time the member state engages with the EU on foreign policy matters, then one should expect that the length of EU membership should ultimately influence national foreign policy decisions. From a commitment intensity perspective, the implication is that if the common EU position on a foreign policy issue calls for more intense commitments (such as EU-level humanitarian task force deployments in conflict areas), then member states might be compelled to go along with the EU position regardless of the executive dynamics at the domestic level—and this relationship should be positively influenced by the length of EU membership. Indeed, Italy was only initially reluctant to act alongside the EU during the UNFCCC negotiations before it changed its position (Groenleer and Van Schaik, 2007: 985).

Having said that, it is also plausible to argue that the younger members of the EU will need the EU more and thus, they are expected to not antagonize the EU by diverging from its common position.<sup>52</sup> If the EU wants to act more committed at the international level, in other

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<sup>52</sup> Previous research on the bargaining power of EU candidate countries, however, suggests that the new members will not necessarily choose to formulate their foreign policy behavior in line with the EU. Discussing the relative weakness of the candidate countries at the bargaining table during the negotiation process, Moravcsik and Vachudova (2003: 44) argue that “applicant countries have consistently found themselves in a weak negotiating position vis-à-vis their EU partners, and accordingly have conceded much in exchange for membership.” However, the authors continue to claim that “membership effectively reverses the power relationship between

words, one can expect the younger member states to go along with it. Indeed, while the Czech parliament was opposed to the ratification of the Rome Statute of the ICC, the Czech government continued to express its commitment to ratification, demonstrating that the government was less influenced by its parliament than by what was expected of them by the European Union (Groenleer and Van Schaik, 2007: 977-978). In sum, in order to see whether either of these explanations holds, a *Years of EU Membership* variable is constructed. This variable measures for how many years the country has been a member of the EU as of December 31, 2004. Figure 3.14 summarizes this variable.<sup>53</sup>

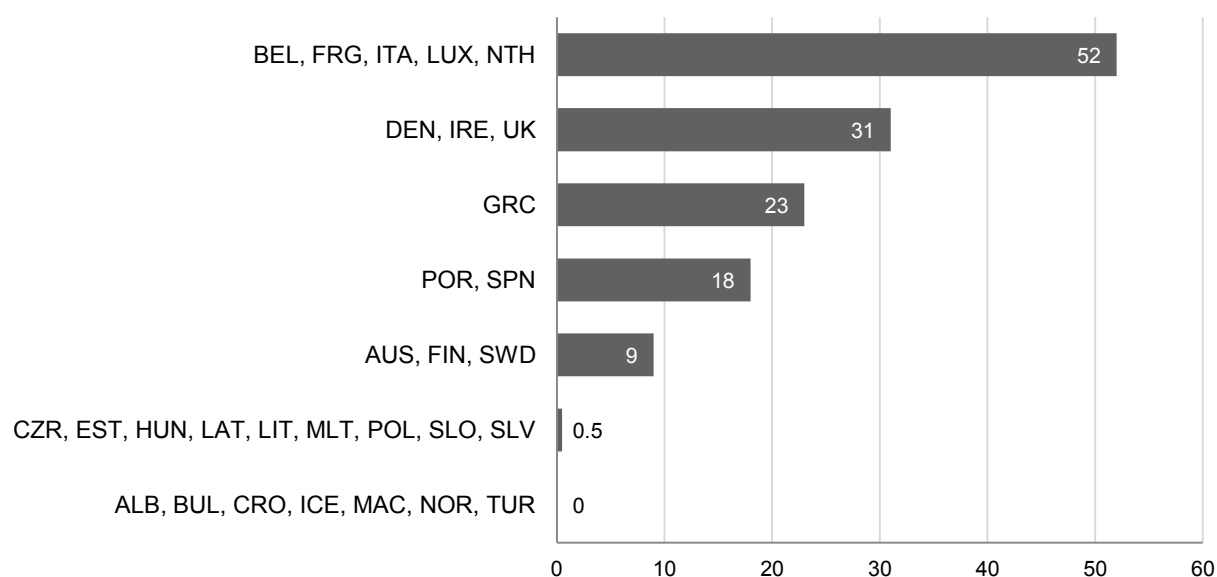


Figure 3.14 Years of EU Membership as of December 31, 2004

core and peripheral members of the EU” (2003: 52), suggesting that once members, these states may easily challenge and refuse to go along with an EU position that could ask for more international commitment than states would otherwise prefer.

<sup>53</sup> As Figure 3.14 implies, a binary “EU membership” variable would have captured the East / West Europe differences instead of EU membership in this period, since (a) the dataset ends at 2004 and (b) the 2004 enlargement was by and large an Eastern European enlargement. For this reason an interval-level measure to test the effect of EU membership is used to capture more variation among the European countries.

Finally, it is reasonable to expect that governments may have to commit more to respond to the international crises that they face during their terms in office, especially when these crises are proximate to the borders of their countries, or when the crisis alters the dynamics of the international system. The decade that this dissertation focuses on has witnessed a number of severe international crises that may have influenced more intense commitments such as military aid provision by those governments who were in charge as these crises took place. Four dummy variables were therefore created to account for the wars in Bosnia and Kosovo as well as the attacks to the U.S. World Trade Center in 2001 and the 2003 invasion of Iraq. These variables assume 1 if the government was in power during the Bosnia War (April 1, 1992 – December 14, 1995), the Kosovo War (February 28, 1998 – June 10, 1999), on the day of September 11th, 2001 or during the 2003 invasion of Iraq (March 13, 2003 – May 1, 2003), and 0 otherwise. Table 3.6 displays the number of governments which were in charge during the course of these major international events.

	<i>Bosnia War</i>	<i>Kosovo War</i>	<i>September 11, 2003</i>	<i>2003 Iraq Invasion</i>	<i>Neither</i>
No. of governments in term during	34	45	28	31	29

Table 3.6 Government term during the Bosnia War, Kosovo War, 9/11, and 2003 Iraq invasion

*(e) Estimation: Multilevel Modeling and Its Advantages*

The preceding sections have discussed the independent and control variables in detail, providing a clearer picture for the quantitative research design. To complete the discussion, this final section lays out the specifics of the quantitative models that will be utilized to estimate the

relationships between commitment intensity in foreign policy behavior and government composition.

Previous studies that focused on the effects of government-level variables on the international behavior of states have used pooled linear or nonlinear models depending on the nature of the dependent variable (Kaarbo and Beasley 2008). The preference for pooled models, however, carries three assumptions that could be misleading. First, using pooled models implies an *a priori* assumption about the nature of the data, such as the observations having objectively the same properties regardless of which country they are drawn from. Second, pooled models assume that the cross-sectional dataset includes roughly the same number of observations from each country so that the possibility of one group of observations driving the results is slim. Third, pooled models disregard the possibility that observations, or foreign policy events in this case, collected from the same country might also be correlated due to historical reasons that are peculiar to that context (that is, there might be high *intra*class correlation), which would violate the OLS assumptions for linear models. These assumptions are risky as they might lead to biased results despite the inclusion of country-level control variables to account for upper-level factors such as the national material capabilities, or years of EU membership that are included in this study.

In order to account for the genuine effects of countries from which the observations are drawn from, a possible solution is to run no-pooled analyses by adding country indicators to the models. This way, one can estimate the latent effects of the countries that the pooled models fail to account for. This approach, however, has the downside of forcing the analyst to exclude the country-level control variables to avoid multicollinearity.

Moreover, it has been argued that no-pooled analyses are erroneous when sample sizes vary dramatically across groups (Gelman and Hill 2007: 8), which is the case with the present dataset. Understandably, media reports from which the events data are generated are biased against smaller countries, and this bias is also reflected in the data: there are 17 events recorded for Iceland, and some 4000 events for Germany between 1994 and 2004, as Figure 3.5 has shown earlier. Scholars argue that such variation in sub-sample sizes is particularly dangerous when using no-pooled models: “No-pooling model overstate[s] the variation among [groups] and tend to make the individual [groups] look more different than they actually are” (Gelman and Hill 2007: 253).

A better way to account for the effect of country differences on commitment intensity while accounting for the effects of country-level variables such as national capabilities is to use multilevel models. As opposed to complete-pooling or no-pooling models, multi-level models use partial pooling and work better for datasets which have variation in group sample sizes as well as between and within groups (Gelman and Hill 2007: 254). The advantage of the multilevel model is that one can check for country-level differences and use country-level variables (such as CINC, or years of EU membership) at the same time, without running into problems of multicollinearity.

Furthermore, the multilevel estimation technique relaxes the assumption that the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables is constant across different contexts, “whereas in fact they are to some extent dependent [on context] because of the hierarchical nesting structure” (Steenbergen and Jones 2002: 227). By acknowledging the effects that contexts can exert on the estimated relationships, multilevel models “permit the analysis of

substantive contextual effects while still allowing for heterogeneity between contextual units” (Steenbergen and Jones 2002: 227).

Finally, multilevel models acknowledge the possibility of “causal heterogeneity” (Western 1998). They facilitate cross-level interactions and help “determine whether the causal effect of lower-level predictors is conditioned or moderated by higher-level predictors” (Steenbergen and Jones 2002: 219). For instance, one could test whether policy incongruence in governments on the event-level also varies across countries as a result of the variation in these countries’ party systems and the issues represented along their left-right political spectrum. Since the present study focuses on European democracies where the left-right spectrum by and large represents the same issue positions for political parties across these regimes, such a cross-level approach will not be adopted in the analyses. However, future studies that go beyond Europe to look at how ideological differences influence international behavior in other parliamentary systems as diverse as India, Canada, Australia or Japan could very well benefit from the cross-level interactions facilitated by multilevel estimation.

In this study, random-intercept models will be used where applicable,<sup>54</sup> in order to model the relationship between commitment intensity and government structure while taking contextual variation into consideration. Specifying the models in multiple levels (at the event-level as well as the country-level) effectively relaxes the assumption that context does not muddle the relationships. Multilevel models with varying intercepts will yield the same slopes for the independent variables (that is, fixed effects), but estimate different intercepts for each country

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<sup>54</sup> Stata 11 simultaneously runs a likelihood ratio test (LR-test) alongside running a multilevel model to check whether the model is statistically different from a classical regression model with the same variable specifications (linear or nonlinear). This dissertation will report and discuss the results of multilevel models where the LR-test holds. In those instances where the LR-test fails to provide statistical significance, results from classical regression models with robust standard errors will be used.



(that is, random effects). Ultimately, the fitted lines will have a unique intercept for each country, but the slope of the relationship will be the same across all other countries. These intercepts will be critical to discern the contextual effects imposed by the countries from which the observations were taken.

Random-intercept models, in this sense, assume that countries (that is, contexts) must be able to account for some of the variation that is left unexplained by the fixed part of the model, where several explanatory variables are introduced to explain the variation in the dependent variable. More specifically, the models specified here work on the assumption that the contexts in which these governments preside introduce a baseline effect on commitment intensity that is not accounted for by the explanatory variables. They also assume that the effect of the components of government composition (government type and policy incongruence) or the national capabilities of the state are constant across these contexts. Policy incongruence inside a government, for instance, is expected to have the same effect on commitment intensity across all countries.<sup>55</sup>

A random-intercept multilevel model specification that uses the variables explained above looks like the following (Rabe-Hesketh and Skrondal, 2008: 94):

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<sup>55</sup> This is to say that random-coefficient models, an alternative way to specify multilevel models, are not used in this dissertation due to the assumption that government-level variables such as policy incongruence or government type will have the same effect (or, the same slope) across all countries. For instance, the model specifications in this dissertation assume that a 2.5 point ideological distance between the political parties in a governing coalition means the same across all countries and that this value will have the same effect on commitment intensity across these countries. Similarly, since CINC is a standardized variable, the model specifications here also assume that its effect will be constant across all countries. Therefore, this variable is not included as a random component of the models. Instead, it is part of the fixed portion of the models.

*Folded Goldstein<sub>ij</sub>*

$$\begin{aligned} &= \beta_0 + \beta_1(\textit{Single party minority}_{ij}) + \beta_2(\textit{Minority coalition}_{ij}) \\ &+ \beta_3(\textit{Minimum winning}_{ij}) + \beta_4(\textit{Oversized}_{ij}) + \beta_5(\textit{Policy incongruence}_{ij}) \\ &+ \beta_6(\textit{CINC}_{ij}) + \beta_7(\textit{Democratic target}_{ij}) \\ &+ \beta_8(\textit{Years of EU membership}_{ij}) + \beta_9(\textit{Bosnia War}_{ij}) \\ &+ \beta_{10}(\textit{Kosovo War}_{ij}) + \beta_{11}(\textit{September 11}_{ij}) + \beta_{12}(\textit{2003 Iraq Invasion}_{ij}) \\ &+ u_j + \varepsilon_{ij} \end{aligned}$$

where the first part of the equation that includes the coefficients  $\beta_0$  to  $\beta_{10}$  corresponds to the fixed-effects. The random effects, or the effects that are not estimated but predicted, are denoted by the second part of the equation that are captured by the sum of error terms,  $u_j + \varepsilon_{ij}$ , where  $u_j$  stands for the random effects, or in this case, random-intercepts, introduced by the countries, and  $\varepsilon_{ij}$  are the errors at the event-level. As hypotheses require, this model will include interaction terms as additional components.<sup>56</sup>

Ultimately, multilevel modeling highlights the main methodological vision of the dissertation from a quantitative viewpoint. Even though a statistical procedure in itself whose objective is to capture parsimonious relationships, the random- and the fixed-effects components of this method respectively account for context and detail—the central objective of the multi-method research design explained in this chapter. Using multilevel estimation in a large-N study of foreign policy behavior not only facilitates a systematic analysis of the relationship between government composition and commitment intensity as the quantitative component of this study intends to find out, but it undertakes this task in a two-pronged fashion where the multilevel

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<sup>56</sup> The `xtmixed` command in Stata 11 will be used with the `mle` option.

characteristics of the procedure estimate intra-country factors alongside those at the country-level to better explain the influence of context on commitment intensity. In fact, the country-level findings of this analysis will be central to case selection as the qualitative research design component also discusses below.

### **Zooming Out, Zooming In: A Qualitative Research Design to Study Commitments**

To explain the intensity of foreign policy commitments in parliamentary regimes in post-Cold War Europe, this dissertation has proposed ‘government composition,’ or more specifically the simultaneous study of government type and policy incongruence, as a key domestic politics explanation. The quantitative research design presented above has offered a nuanced, context-conscious approach to systematically analyze the power of this explanation on commitment behavior. Namely, it has proposed to explicate the independent and interactive effects of the type and the ideological diversity of multiparty governments on their commitment intensity alongside a series of control variables to account for international and contextual factors. This discussion has also highlighted the advantages of multilevel modeling to carry out a quantitative analysis that can be attentive to parsimony and context at the same time.

It is now time to zoom out. This chapter has started with the argument that to comprehensively capture the explanatory power of the ‘government composition’ thesis, it is also important to uncover its mechanisms. How does government composition *lead to* a change in the intensity of international commitments? Furthermore, Chapter 2 has emphasized at length that given the breadth of the literature on foreign policy analysis and the second-image perspectives of International Relations theories, government type and ideological diversity are just two of the several factors that explain foreign policy behavior. It is important to take into

account the other factors at the domestic and the international level, as well as those factors pertaining to the leadership dynamics at the governmental level, some of which may not be quantifiable to incorporate in the existing datasets for statistical analysis. These explanations could be of great utility to uncover the mechanisms that link the composition of coalition governments to their foreign policy commitments, as well as help explain some of the anomalies in these behaviors that cannot be readily predicted by the government composition explanation.

To address these gaps, the qualitative design component suggests that we zoom back in, this time by considering the alternative explanations alongside the key explanation raised in Chapter 2. Using a comparative case study approach, the qualitative component of the multi-method design will therefore move beyond the quantitative analysis and contextualize two of the key findings of the dissertation regarding the ‘policy viability’ and ‘veto players’ hypotheses: it will assess the mediating effects of policy incongruence on the commitment intensities of minority and minimum winning coalitions in Denmark and the Netherlands, respectively. Specifically, the qualitative research design will evaluate the influence of government composition on the commitment behavior of the coalitions in these states while taking into account the alternative explanations that include logrolling dynamics among political parties, threats to national survival, public opinion and political leadership. These alternative explanations will be complemented with an analysis of historical foreign policy orientations and domestic political norms in each state so as to situate the commitment behaviors of their governments within the regime’s greater policy context. The section below provides a discussion of this qualitative effort.

*(a) Case Selection:*

First and foremost, why are Denmark and the Netherlands chosen for qualitative analysis? Unlike Germany—another coalition powerhouse of parliamentary Europe—Denmark and the Netherlands fall into the category of small states. As Kaarbo (2012: 72) quotes from Van Staden’s (1989: 109) earlier work: “small powers ... may be net consumers rather than producers of security and likewise their options may be more constrained than of major allies, it is nevertheless false to believe that their behavior is completely determined by the parameters of international power constellations or that is fully conditioned by outside pressures.” Doeser (2013: 583) calls this dynamic the “home-court advantage” of international-level theories.

Put differently, small states make the ‘least-likely’ cases (Doeser 2013: 583) for studies such as this contribution, which focus on the role of domestic politics in determining international behavior. To the extent that the domestic political dynamics of small states—most importantly, their coalition dynamics—outweigh international systemic factors such as alliance structures or the distribution of power in explaining the intensity of their commitment behaviors, the argument raised in this dissertation will have far more leverage in explaining the commitments of ‘bigger states,’ for which international factors constitute even weaker causes for concern. Denmark and the Netherlands, two of the smaller states in Europe, were chosen precisely to take on this challenge.

The second reason why these countries were chosen for this study has to do with their institutional consistency. Damgaard (2000: 231) explains that in Denmark “majority coalition governments have been the exception rather than the rule,” pointing out the frequency of minority coalitions in this country. Similarly, studies on Dutch politics show that minimum winning coalitions have been the predominant institutional outcome since the 1970s (Pennings

and Keman 2008: 159). These two countries, in other words, respectively provide the best institutional environments for studying the foreign policy behaviors of minority and minimum winning coalitions. Choosing the cases from the Denmark and the Netherlands thus controls for domestic-institutional variation and allows me to assume that the cases do not constitute unique instances with regards to their political systems.

Finally, Denmark and the Netherlands are chosen to evaluate the “baseline commitment intensity” levels as determined by the random-intercept models which will be presented in Chapter 4. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the random-intercept models in multilevel estimation are advantageous to discern the influence of country-level factors on commitment intensity that cannot be captured by the independent and control variables in the analyses. As Chapter 4 will show, Denmark stands as an outlier country in Europe while the Netherlands shows a much more modest independent effect on commitment intensity, falling within the range of other European countries in the quantitative analysis. Especially for Denmark, the case analyses presented in Chapter 5 will therefore be informative to shed light on some of the latent factors that were not accounted for by the ‘fixed’ portion of the empirical models. It will help us better understand why Denmark seems to commit far more intensely than expected by the regression analysis at the international level, when compared to its European counterparts. This is precisely where the interactive relationship between diverse methodologies that multi-method designs ever aspire to achieve can be observed most dramatically.

The second question on case selection concerns why these cases from Denmark and the Netherlands were chosen in particular. First, as discussed above, all three cases are instances of international cooperation towards military intervention that communicate international commitment, either in the form of resource allocation such as naval and human capabilities as in

the case of Denmark, or in the form of political support *with incremental resource allocation*, as the Dutch case reveals. In other words, the topical (issue area) similarity of these events allows for better comparisons.

Furthermore, all three cases are concerned with the Iraqi regime within the context of the transatlantic leadership, which provides consistency with regards to the allies and the targets that these commitments engage in. In other words, the events also control for contextual and actor similarity.

The two Danish cases were chosen to study the most significant inflection points in Denmark's foreign policy, or in other words, to show that even the most dramatic foreign policy issues can be influenced primarily by domestic political dynamics. First, as Chapter 5 will discuss, sending the warship to the Gulf in 1990 signaled the end of the 'footnote policy era' in Danish foreign policy and marked the beginning of Danish activism in foreign policy (Doeser 2013). Further, this case was also chosen to provide an 'out-of-sample' demonstration of the 'policy viability' and 'fragmented opposition' explanations.

Denmark's 2003 decision to join the war coalition in Iraq, on the other hand, not only provides a within-case comparison for Denmark's involvement in the Gulf region, but it also constitutes the second historical turning point for Danish foreign policy as it challenged the consensus-seeking nature of Danish politics, causing a split between the hawkish/pro-US and dovish/pro-UN supporters of an activist foreign policy in the parliament. In sum, to the extent that government composition in a small state such as Denmark at two different points in time—during the final stages of the Cold War and well into the post-Cold War years—explains how this country decided to participate in international military operations, it will provide strong

support for the power of domestic-level explanations vis-à-vis those focusing on the international.

The final case of the qualitative analysis, the 2003 Dutch decision to provide to provide ‘political, but not military’ support for the war in Iraq, was chosen for two reasons. First, it allows for cross-country comparisons with the 2003 Danish decision to join the war coalition. More importantly, however, the case provides an exceptional setting where three different coalitions (more specifically, two governing coalitions and a third coalition in-the-making) tackle one foreign policy issue: support for the war in Iraq. Whereas the Danish cases take a discrete approach toward studying government composition and international commitment by looking at two different points in time, the Dutch case portrays the continuous character of international politics, where governments might come and go while dealing with common foreign policy challenges along the way. Looking at the changes in government and their effects on the variation in the Dutch commitment towards the Iraq war will therefore be informative to understand whether and how the fluidity of a state’s domestic politics influences its international behavior.

*(b) Dependent Variable:*

The dependent variable in the qualitative analysis concerns three instances of international commitment, namely Denmark’s 1990 decision to send the naval corvette *Olfert Fischer* to the Gulf and the 2003 decision to participate in the Iraq war coalition with “a 24-member submarine and a 91-member escort” (Kaarbo and Cantir 2013) respectively, as well as the 2003 Dutch decision to commit political support for the 2003 Iraq war. All of these cases are instances of international commitment to military operations in the Middle East, though they vary in the



extent to which they involve verbal and nonverbal forms of behavior. The Danish cases are examples of extending military assistance—the most intense cooperative international commitment (8.3) as the Goldstein (1992) commitment scale introduced earlier denotes. On the contrary, the Dutch case begins with political (verbal) support for the war (3.6 on the Goldstein scale) but as Chapter 6 will explain in detail, incremental material support was also provided by the Dutch along the way, therefore increasing their commitment intensity score above the 3.6 level.

These three instances of commitment behavior will be explained by utilizing the method of structured-focused comparison. The next sections introduce the method of structured-focused comparison as well as the independent variables, which are derived from the theoretical framework offered in Chapter 2.

*(c) The Method:*

To assess the effects of government composition on the intensity of international commitments in Denmark and the Netherlands alongside the alternative explanations discussed in Chapter 2, I use George's (1979) *method of structured, focused comparison*. This method “encourages analysts to ask a set of ‘standardized, general questions’ across cases” (Mahoney 2004: 1099) in order to evaluate the presence, absence, or the intensity of independent variables of interest on the observed outcome.

The method of structured, focused comparison “deals selectively with only certain aspects of the historical case” (George 1979: 61) while “assur[ing] the acquisition of comparable data from the several cases” (George 1979: 62) through the use of standardized questions, each of which are tailored to measure the independent variables. The method thus cannot exhaust all

possible explanations of the phenomena. Nevertheless, this method allows the investigator to focus on their most important possible causes and provides “*systematic and contextualized comparisons*” (Mahoney 2004: 1100, emphasis added) across and within cases. In effect, the method further illuminates the core methodological vision emphasized throughout this chapter. As it maintains the balance between systematic inquiry and context-oriented evaluation, the method of structured-focused comparison facilitates powerful qualitative analysis that continues to remain attentive to revealing comparable, succinct findings while ensuring that these findings are situated within their international, domestic, and even individual contexts.

*(d) Independent Variables:*

As described above, asking standardized questions across a small number of cases to identify the presence and the effects of independent variables of interest is the foundation of the method of structured-focused comparison. The following questions are designed to evaluate the effects of a series of independent variables on the commitment decisions of Denmark and the Netherlands to support the wars in the Gulf and in Iraq. These questions are designed to not only evaluate the effects of the key explanation emphasized in this study, namely government composition, but also the alternative explanations introduced in Chapter 2.

*Ideological Composition:* Which parties were included in the Danish minority and the Dutch minimum winning coalitions at the time of these events? What were their left-right ideological positions in their respective political systems and what were their policy positions regarding the proposals to commit in the Gulf or in the Iraq war coalition?

*Logrolling:* Were there any parties inside or outside the governments in Denmark and the Netherlands that gave support to the decisions in 1990 or 2003 in return for future side-payments? Was the support of these parties contingent on future policy or office payoffs?

*Public Opinion:* Were the 1990 Gulf and the 2003 Iraq wars and the possibility of joining these wars publicly popular in these countries? Was public opinion influential on these regimes' decisions to engage in foreign policy commitments in the Gulf War and in the war in Iraq?

*Threat to National Survival:* Did the Danish and the Dutch governments perceive the foreign policy situations in the Gulf (1990) and in Iraq (2003) as threats to their national survival? Was there any domestic political crisis at the time that compelled the government to divert the public's attention?

*Political Leadership:* Were there any influential political leaders in the Danish and Dutch governments who hijacked the decision-making process and forced the government to make commitments in their own preferred direction? Were personal motivations involved in these commitment decisions?

Finally, the analysis will look at two more contextual factors that could influence policy-making. The first factor concerns the *historical orientations* of foreign policy in Denmark and the Netherlands: What are the historical foreign policy orientations of these states? Did their commitment decisions in Iraq and in the Gulf conform to or deviate from these orientations? The second factor concerns the existence of *consensus-seeking norms* in the policy-making

environments of these states: are the Danish and Dutch political systems mostly competitive or do policy-makers mostly seek consensus in decision-making? These questions will be discussed in detail throughout each analysis to provide the foreign policy and domestic political competition contexts in each state.

To respond to these standardized questions, several primary and secondary sources have been utilized. To investigate the ideological positions and foreign policy preferences of the Danish and Dutch political parties, primary resources such as statements of party leaders and advisers are used alongside expert survey datasets on party positions such as the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (Hooghe et al. 2010) and the Ray-Marks-Steenbergen dataset<sup>57</sup> (Ray 1999; Steenbergen and Marks 2007), as well as other secondary resources that provide historical accounts such as Damgaard (2000), Andeweg and Irwin (2005) and the Inter-Parliamentary Union's PARLINE online database of national parliaments.

Evidence for logrolling, threats to national survival and political leadership also come from party statements and other secondary accounts, including news articles from the international media, the *Danish Foreign Policy Yearbooks* (2012, 2013), reports from the *Danish Institute for International Studies* (Olesen 2012) and the *Danish Defense Commission* (1998), as well as scholarly books and articles. Finally, the *Economist Intelligence Unit's* monthly reports on Denmark and the Netherlands between 2001 and 2003 have been utilized among other scholarly accounts to trace the changes in the public opinion ratings of parties in the parliament as well as other, more instantaneous developments in the country's foreign and domestic politics.

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<sup>57</sup> This dataset is used primarily in the discussion of the 1990 Denmark case. As discussed previously in this chapter, the CHES datasets methodologically echo the Ray-Steenbergen-Marks surveys, which facilitate its simultaneous use with CHES.

## Conclusion

This chapter has raised the argument that it is crucial to combine and harmonize quantitative and qualitative methodologies in order to comprehensively demonstrate the analytical power of the ‘government composition’ thesis, and more generally, the ‘coalition politics framework’ introduced in Chapter 2.

The chapter has begun with the assertion that we should seek to exploit the advantages of *both* methodologies. By using qualitative and quantitative methodologies in tandem, we can develop systematic accounts of foreign policy behavior while at the same time uncovering the mechanisms that lay beneath these relationships and the contextual factors that might further influence them. To that end, this chapter has provided an extensive account of the multi-method research strategy adopted in this dissertation to explain the international commitment intensity of post-Cold War European parliamentary systems by focusing on their government composition as the key explanatory factor. Furthermore, the multi-method approach also offers a good methodological fit towards building multilevel and multicausal explanations of foreign policy while maintaining systematization and rigor on one hand and attentiveness to context and detail on the other, as prescribed by James Rosenau and Charles Kegley.

In this effort, the chapter has first introduced the major cornerstones of the empirical analyses, namely the operationalization and measurement of the key independent variables—government type and policy incongruence—as well as the dependent variable, commitment intensity. Next, the chapter has introduced the quantitative research design by discussing the foreign policy events dataset and laying out the dependent, independent and control variables that will be employed in the regression analyses. This section concluded with a discussion of the

advantages of multilevel modeling, which is the estimation procedure that will be used in the statistical analyses.

The most critical point suggested throughout the quantitative research design section of the chapter has been that even though the large-N analysis is utilized to provide a parsimonious account of the relationship between government composition and commitment intensity, the level of detail and attentiveness to context introduced by the independent and control variables as well as the estimation technique nicely corresponds to the greater methodological vision of the dissertation—that nuance and parsimony can indeed go hand in hand, even in quantitative research.

The chapter has then moved on to discussing the need to complement the quantitative analysis with qualitative insights. In order to establish the explanatory power of government composition and the underlying mechanisms that link its influence to commitment behavior, it is important to empirically demonstrate how this key explanation performs on its own as well as against the alternative international-, domestic- or individual-level explanations. As the final section of Chapter 2 has highlighted, government composition is one of the several possible explanations of commitment behavior at the international level. Most of these alternative explanations work as facilitating, inhibiting or reinforcing factors that influence foreign policy behavior. Therefore, their effects can be best evaluated through qualitative research designs.

With that in mind, this chapter has offered a qualitative research design component to outline the methodology behind the case analyses of the Danish decisions to join the 1990 war in the Gulf and the 2003 war in Iraq, as well as the Dutch decision to give political support to the 2003 war in Iraq. These cases are selected to explicate the ‘policy viability / fragmented opposition’ explanation regarding minority coalitions (Denmark) and the ‘veto players’

explanation regarding minimum winning coalitions (the Netherlands). The discussion has outlined the method of structured-focused comparison for the qualitative analyses and provided an extensive account of the case selection strategy, independent variables and the data sources.

The qualitative research design has echoed its quantitative counterpart in emphasizing the methodological vision of the dissertation. Through the utilization of the method of structured-focused comparison and standardized questions, the qualitative component of this dissertation, too, aims to maintain a systematic inquiry of commitment behavior across the minority coalitions in Denmark and the minimum winning coalitions in the Netherlands. While doing that, however, the qualitative nature of the method continues to provide greater room to include detail and contextual evidence in the analysis.

Ultimately, the multi-method approach offered in this chapter aspires to result in a fruitful, engaging and comprehensive empirical analysis of foreign policy behavior in post-Cold War European governments toward developing a coalition politics framework. The next three chapters present the empirical outcomes of this effort.

## CHAPTER 4

### COALITION GOVERNMENTS AND INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS: A QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS<sup>58</sup>

#### Introduction

As part of the multi-method research design employed in this study, this chapter takes a quantitative approach to explain international commitments across European governments in the post-Cold War era, specifically the period from 1994 to 2004. The chapter seeks to uncover whether the composition of governments parliamentary democracies, described as the parliamentary arithmetic of the government and the level of policy incongruence among the government parties, affects the intensity of commitments in their foreign policy behavior.

As a refresher, Table 4.1 below summarizes the hypotheses that were introduced in Chapter 2.

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<sup>58</sup> Sections from this chapter are published in Oktay, S. (2014) Constraining or Enabling? The Effects of Government Composition on International Commitments, *Journal of European Public Policy*, 21(6): 860-884.



<b>Hypothesis 1</b>	<i>Due to their size vulnerability, minority governments will be negatively associated with commitment intensity.</i>
<b>Hypothesis 2a</b>	<i>All coalition governments will be negatively associated with commitment intensity (veto player approach).</i>
<b>Hypothesis 2b</b>	<i>All coalition governments will be positively associated with commitment intensity in their international behavior (clarity of responsibility approach).</i>
<b>Hypothesis 3a</b>	<i>After controlling for ideological differences, both oversized coalitions and minimum winning coalitions will have a positive relationship with commitment intensity.</i>
<b>Hypothesis 3b</b>	<i>After controlling for ideological differences, oversized coalitions will engage in more committed behavior than minimum winning coalitions.</i>
<b>Hypothesis 4a</b>	<i>At increasing levels of ideological disunity inside the government, oversized coalitions will be negatively associated with commitment intensity compared to single-party majority governments.</i>
<b>Hypothesis 4b</b>	<i>At increasing levels of ideological disunity inside the government, minimum winning coalitions will be negatively associated with commitment intensity compared to single-party majority governments.</i>
<b>Hypothesis 5a</b>	<i>Minority coalitions will be negatively associated with commitment intensity regardless of the ideological differences among the coalition parties.</i>
<b>Hypothesis 5b</b>	<i>If minority coalitions can ideologically fragment the parliamentary opposition, they will be positively associated with commitment intensity compared to single-party majority governments.</i>

Table 4.1 Summary of Hypotheses

This chapter begins by reporting the findings of three sets of multilevel regression analyses, where each set employs a different measure of policy incongruence, namely the

standard deviation of party positions from the coalition mean, ideological range, and a categorical variable that measures whether the government includes parties from both the political right and left (“*center is crossed*”). The chapter will conclude with an overview of the findings and what they mean for the existing literature on foreign policy analysis.

A major contribution of this chapter is that through the use of multilevel modeling, the results demonstrate how countries—regardless of their government composition or material capabilities—vary in their commitment intensity. As such, the findings reported in this chapter call for a more nuanced study of domestic-level variables on international outcomes: variable-based approaches to the quantitative analysis of second-image-level puzzles can be improved by incorporating more sophisticated statistical tools that can help account for other underlying effects that are not accounted for individually by variable specification.

### **Policy Incongruence as “*Standard Deviation from the Mean Coalition Position*”**

Table 4.2a below presents the results of the analyses that use *Standard deviation of government party positions* to measure policy incongruence. This table includes seven models that illustrate how the relationship between government composition and international commitments changes as more nuanced conceptualizations and aspects of “government structure” are adopted along the way, as well as different estimation approaches.<sup>59</sup> For simplicity, Table 4.2a excludes the models that test the effects of the additional control variables. These additional models are provided in Table 4.2b.

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<sup>59</sup> The `xtmixed`, `mle` command in Stata 11 is used to run the multilevel regression analyses. Likelihood ratio tests for all models indicate that the multilevel models are statistically different from ordinary least squares models that include the same set of variables. It is advised that scholars use multilevel model specifications when they are statistically different from the OLS specifications.

Model 1 replicates previous approaches and uses ordinary least squares (OLS) regression with robust standard errors to test the effects of two independent variables that are used frequently in similar research studies—coalition and minority government.<sup>60</sup> This model shows that when the OLS estimation is used, neither the *Coalition* nor the *Minority government* dummy variable has a statistically significant effect on the intensity of international commitments of European parliamentary democracies during the 1994-2004 period.

Model 2 shows that the findings from Model 1 change once the characteristics of the dataset are considered and a multilevel model (MLM) is used to test the same set of independent variables. The results show that minority governments significantly decrease the intensity of international commitments, supporting *Hypothesis 1*. Moreover, the negative and significant coefficient for *Coalition* in Model 2 suggests that the veto players approach finds support in general, while the clarity of responsibility approach does not: having many parties in government decreases the intensity of international commitments. *Hypothesis 2a is supported* and *Hypothesis 2b is rejected*. Finally, minority coalitions have the largest negative effect on commitment (~0.3 points).

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<sup>60</sup> Kaarbo and Beasley (2008) use a logistic model as they explain the effects of these variables on a binary dependent variable. The main point here is that regardless of the nature of the dependent variable, the analysis used to estimate the relationship focuses only on the fixed-effects of the independent variables rather than considering both fixed and random effects.

	(1) (OLS)	(2) (MLM)	(3) (MLM)	(4) (MLM)	(5) (MLM)	(7) (MLM)	(9) (MLM)
Coalition	-0.064 (0.034)	-0.145* (0.066)					
Minority Government	-0.059 (0.042)	-0.141* (0.060)					
CINC	-9.617*** (1.551)	-8.009* (3.724)	-7.436* (3.702)	-11.342** (4.133)	-11.333** (4.125)	-11.161** (4.045)	-11.733* (4.678)
Democratic Target	-0.321*** (0.039)	-0.319*** (0.038)	-0.320*** (0.038)	-0.321*** (0.040)	-0.321*** (0.040)	-0.320*** (0.040)	-0.320*** (0.040)
Single-party Minority			-0.082 (0.089)	-0.087 (0.091)	-0.087 (0.091)	-0.084 (0.090)	-0.107 (0.096)
Minority Coalition			-0.275** (0.097)	-0.067 (0.150)	-0.060 (0.215)	0.080 (0.164)	-0.216 (0.170)
Minimum Winning Co.			-0.140 (0.084)	0.151 (0.119)	0.149 (0.131)	-0.024 (0.144)	0.039 (0.136)
Oversized Co.			-0.046 (0.090)	0.323* (0.132)	0.320* (0.144)	0.404** (0.136)	0.551*** (0.167)
Pol. Incongruence ( <i>St. Dev.</i> )				-0.192** (0.060)	-0.190** (0.071)	-0.291*** (0.077)	-0.110 (0.073)
Minority Co. * Pol. Inc.					-0.006 (0.140)		
Minimum Win. * Pol. Inc.						0.228* (0.109)	
Oversized * Pol. Inc.							-0.292* (0.122)
Constant	2.526*** (0.048)	2.590*** (0.072)	2.555*** (0.081)	2.586*** (0.084)	2.586*** (0.084)	2.589*** (0.083)	2.599*** (0.090)
Country-Level Std. Error		0.133*** (0.034)	0.131*** (0.035)	0.137*** (0.038)	0.136*** (0.042)	0.132*** (0.037)	0.164*** (0.045)
Event-Level Std. Error		1.783*** (0.012)	1.783*** (0.012)	1.791*** (0.013)	1.791*** (0.013)	1.790*** (0.013)	1.790*** (0.013)
<i>Rho</i>		0.006	0.005	0.006	0.006	0.005	0.008
<i>N</i>	11211	11211	11211	9963	9963	9963	9963

Standard errors are in parentheses.

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Table 4.2a Commitment Intensity in Foreign Policy Behavior, Folded Goldstein Scores  
(IV: Standard deviation of party positions from the mean Left-Right position of the coalition)

	(6)	(8)	(10)
	(MLM)	(MLM)	(MLM)
CINC	-13.412** (4.923)	-13.679** (4.670)	-14.282** (5.345)
Democratic Target	-0.316*** (0.040)	-0.317*** (0.040)	-0.317*** (0.040)
Single-party Minority	-0.124 (0.098)	-0.102 (0.096)	-0.133 (0.101)
Minority Coalition	-0.110 (0.221)	0.010 (0.172)	-0.255 (0.174)
Minimum Winning Co.	0.100 (0.139)	-0.054 (0.152)	0.012 (0.142)
Oversized Co.	0.273 (0.150)	0.359** (0.139)	0.482** (0.175)
Pol. Incongruence ( <i>St. Dev.</i> )	-0.173* (0.075)	-0.273*** (0.080)	-0.112 (0.074)
Minority Co. * Pol. Inc.	-0.024 (0.145)		
Minimum Win. * Pol. Inc.		0.215 (0.117)	
Oversized * Pol. Inc.			-0.252 (0.133)
Years of EU Membership	0.001 (0.002)	0.002 (0.002)	0.002 (0.003)
September 11, 2001	-0.035 (0.063)	-0.037 (0.062)	-0.020 (0.063)
2003 Iraq Invasion	-0.125 (0.089)	-0.095 (0.089)	-0.098 (0.091)
Bosnia War	-0.006 (0.063)	-0.022 (0.063)	-0.013 (0.063)
Kosovo War	-0.034 (0.055)	-0.038 (0.054)	-0.025 (0.055)
Constant	2.638*** (0.100)	2.625*** (0.097)	2.629*** (0.105)
Country-Level Std. Error	0.144*** (0.044)	0.133*** (0.038)	0.161*** (0.044)
Event-Level Std. Error	1.790*** (0.013)	1.790*** (0.013)	1.789*** (0.013)
<i>Rho</i>	0.006	0.005	0.008
<i>N</i>	9963	9963	9963

Standard errors are in parentheses.

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Table 4.2b Commitment Intensity in Foreign Policy Behavior, Folded Goldstein Scores, with Additional Control Variables (IV: *Standard deviation of party positions*)

Model 3 and the subsequent models in Table 4.2a explicate government types so that single-party majority governments remain as the baseline for the analyses, captured by the constant term in the regressions. The negative and significant coefficient for *Minority coalition* in Model 3 suggests that minority coalitions are significantly different from all other government types and they engage in less intense international commitments than single-party majority governments. Thus, *Hypothesis 5a is supported*. Model 3 also suggests that it is misleading to consider *Coalition* and *Minority government* as homogenous categories as Model 2 does, since the negative and significant effects of these variables seem to come from minority coalitions only.

When policy incongruence is accounted for in Model 4, however, the empirical support for *Hypothesis 5a* disappears. Further, the negative and significant coefficient for the *Policy Incongruence* variable suggests that as coalition parties are more dispersed ideologically, the intensity of their international commitments decreases significantly.

Model 4 also presents a refined approach to test the clarity of responsibility thesis. It shows that when all coalition types are set to a constant level of ideological dispersion, oversized coalitions act significantly more committed than single-party majority governments. The results therefore partially support *Hypothesis 3a* as only oversized coalitions engage in more intense commitments than single-party majority coalitions. In other words, the clarity of responsibility thesis is supported only for oversized coalitions, which command more parties than other majority coalitions in the dataset. As such, the results echo Vowles (2010), who shows that coalition governments of three or more parties in more developed democracies enjoy less

accountability.<sup>61</sup> The results also reject *Hypothesis 3b*, since the statistical insignificance of the coefficient for *Minimum winning coalition* does not allow for the comparison of minimum winning and oversized coalitions regarding the size of their effects on commitment intensity.

Model 4 assumes that the effect of policy incongruence is the same across all coalition types as it generates a single slope, while the effects of different coalitions on commitment intensity are captured by their respective intercepts. Considering the expectations of the veto player approach, what if policy incongruence has different effects for different coalitions? The next models therefore refine the veto players approach and test whether policy incongruence moderates the effect of different majority coalitions on commitment intensity. In Table 4.2a, Models 5, 7, and 9 include interaction terms constituted by coalition type and policy incongruence to test these effects, first without the additional control variables. Table 4.2b then includes these control variables in Models 6, 8, and 10 for robustness.

First, take oversized coalitions. Model 9 in Table 4.2a shows that the interaction term (*Oversized\*Pol. Inc.*) is negative and significant, indicating that as policy incongruence increases in an oversized coalition, its commitment intensity decreases compared to single-party majority governments. The results therefore support *Hypothesis 4a*. As more parties from divergent ideological positions populate an oversized coalition, it becomes harder for this government to engage in more intense international commitments.

The results above, however, also suggested that having an oversized coalition enabled more intense commitments through diffusion. How do we reconcile these outcomes? These findings suggest that an oversized coalition enjoys diffusion of responsibility when compared to other coalitions with the same level of ideological dispersion *as long as* this dispersion is not

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<sup>61</sup> In the present dataset, the average number of parties is 2.72 for minimum winning coalitions, and 3.9 for oversized coalitions.

disturbed. As the interaction term shows, an increase in the policy incongruence of existing oversized coalitions leads to a decrease in the intensity of their international commitments. In other words, if a party joins an oversized coalition, its left-right ideological position should not cause a stretch in the existing level of dispersion in the coalition in order not to decrease its commitment intensity.

Figure 4.1 below explains this phenomenon graphically. Suppose a Party D joins an existing oversized coalition, 'ABC,' whose ideological dispersion is defined by the parties A, B, and C. If Party D's ideological position fell anywhere between those of A and C (*Scenario I*), the new oversized coalition ABCD would be an even bigger oversized coalition with the same level of policy incongruence as the dispersion of the parties from the mean coalition position would not expand.<sup>62</sup> In fact, this new coalition would act even more committed than the previous tripartite coalition as with more parties, increased diffusion of responsibility would allow the new coalition to increase the intensity of its commitments.<sup>63</sup> However, if Party D's ideological position fell to the right of Party C or to the left of Party A (*Scenario II*), then the policy incongruence of the new ABCD coalition would be greater than that of the ABC coalition. Thus, given the results of Model 9, the increased ideological dispersion would cause a decrease in the commitment intensity of the new coalition.

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<sup>62</sup> In fact, the standard deviation value would decrease, mathematically speaking.

<sup>63</sup> Simple correlations show that the strength of the positive relationship between oversized coalitions and commitment intensity almost doubles from .44 to .73 as the number of parties in the coalition goes from three to four (significant at  $p < 0.005$ ).



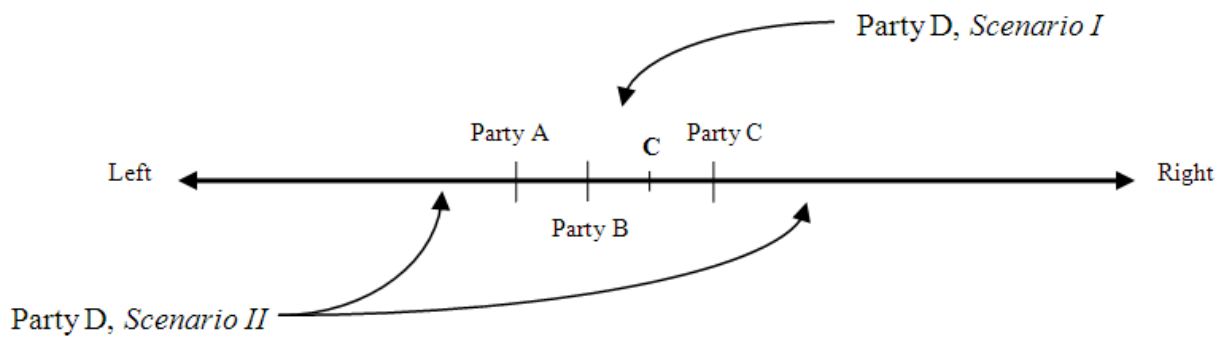


Figure 4.1 Oversized Coalitions and Policy Incongruence

Next, consider minimum winning coalitions. Model 7 shows that the interaction term *Minimum Win.\*Pol. Inc.* has a significant coefficient, though its sign is the opposite of what was expected. *Hypothesis 4b* cannot be supported: when policy incongruence increases in minimum winning coalitions they engage in more—not less—intense commitments than single-party majority governments.

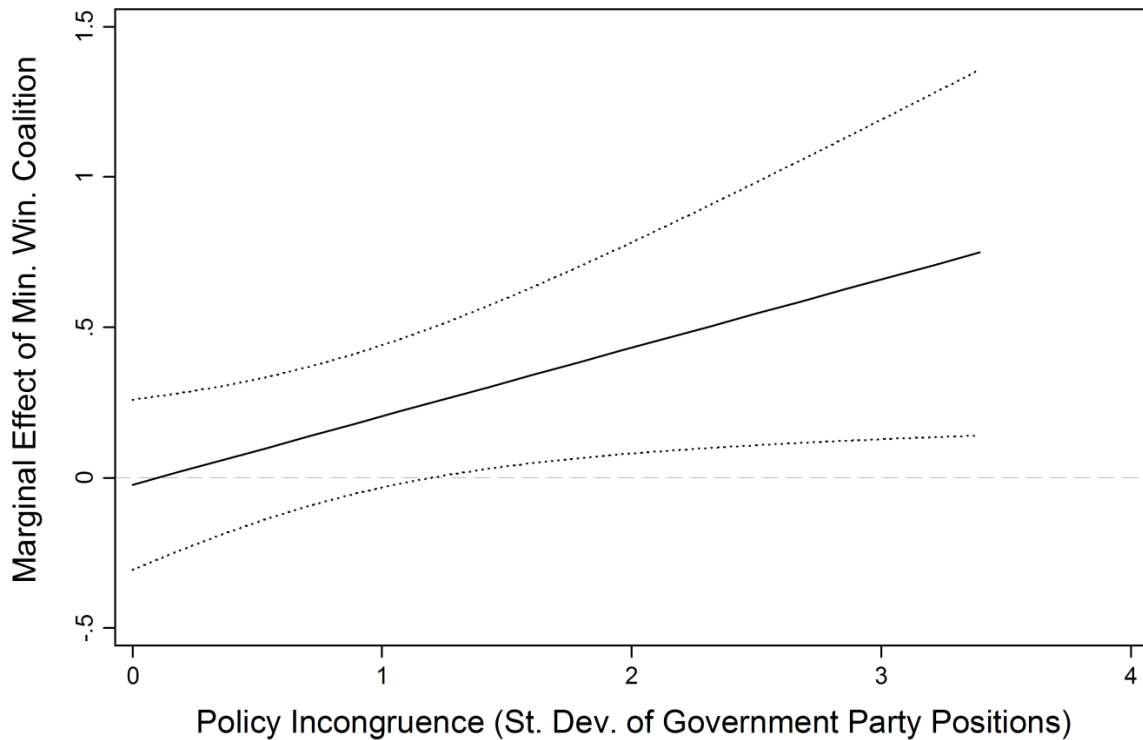


Figure 4.2 Marginal Effect of Minimum Winning Coalitions on Commitment Intensity, with 95% Confidence Intervals (Table 4.2a, Model 7)

Figure 4.2 above suggests that a two unit increase in the dispersion of party ideologies in a minimum winning coalition increases its commitment intensity by about 0.5 points when compared to single-party governments. This corresponds to a move from issuing an informal complaint (-1.9) to a formal complaint (-2.4), or more dramatically, from threatening with force (-7.0) to actual armed force mobilization (-7.6).

A possible explanation for this finding is that at higher levels of policy incongruence, minimum winning coalitions suffer from fragility and lack domestic legitimacy, to which they might respond by diversionary foreign policy (Smith 1996). In this vein, Hagan (1993: 30) argues that “even the most unstable coalition may try to act on major foreign policy issues in

order to demonstrate its ability to cope with policy crises and thereby achieve some legitimacy at home.” Second, junior parties in these coalitions have credible blackmail power that allows them to hijack the government toward their own policy position by threatening to defect if their preferences are not met (Kaarbo 1996a, 1996b, Clare 2010). Any party in a loosely connected minimum winning coalition might then pull the coalition toward its own position and force it to act more committed in its preferred direction. Clare (2010) has found, for instance, that pivotal, right-wing outlier parties in coalitions pull the government towards international conflict involvement.

Finally, the insignificance of the interaction term for minority coalitions in Model 5 shows that the ideological dispersion inside these governments does not moderate their commitment intensity. This gives support to the claim that size vulnerability is the mechanism that drives these governments toward lower levels of intensity when compared to their single-party majority counterparts.

Models 6, 8, and 10 in Table 4.2b include the crisis and the EU control variables for robustness, and they have no significant effect on the intensity of commitments in foreign policy behavior. Furthermore, they also lead to a loss of statistical significance when they are included in the models. For instance in Models 8 and 10, the interaction terms are no longer significant even though they retain the expected sign.

It is especially interesting that the length of EU membership has no effect on the commitment intensity of European governments, considering the Union’s increasingly proactive foreign and security frameworks over the years as well as its economic interactions with other international actors. The other control variables, *CINC* and *Democratic Target*, are both

negatively associated with commitment intensity, echoing earlier findings (Kaarbo and Beasley 2008).

Finally, the intra-class correlation, or *Rho*, reports the ratio of variance explained by the country-level effects to the sum of variation explained by both country- and event-levels.<sup>64</sup> The *Rho* values in Tables 4.2a and 4.2b range between 0.5 percent and 0.8 percent, which indicate low intra-class correlation: the events that come from the same country are not correlated strongly enough to bias the results. These values also suggest that less than one percent of the variation in the data is explained by the country-level factors which constitute the ‘random-effects’ portion of the models. The *rho* values, in other words, provide additional statistical leverage for the results since they suggest that the country-level factors that are not explicitly accounted for in the models explain only a tiny fraction of the variance in the data.

### **Policy Incongruence as “Ideological Range”**

To provide robustness to the results reported in Tables 4.2a and 4.2b, a second set of tests uses *ideological range* as a measure of policy incongruence. This measure uses the distance between the most distant parties in a coalition along the left-right political spectrum (Tsebelis 1999). As explained in the previous chapter, this measure of policy incongruence is very highly correlated with the ideological dispersion measure used earlier (Warwick 1992). Following the previous format, Table 4.3a below presents the results without the additional control variables

The first three models in Table 4.3a are the same as those reported in Table 4.2a. Model 1 uses ordinary least squares estimation to replicate earlier studies, Model 2 uses multilevel

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<sup>64</sup> Mathematically, *Rho* can be expressed as 
$$\frac{(\text{Country-level standard error})^2}{(\text{Country-level standard error})^2 + (\text{Event-level standard error})^2}$$
 and it is also known as *intra-class correlation*.

estimation to re-test Model 1, and Model 3 looks at the individual effects of different coalition types on commitment intensity, respectively. The rest of the models use multilevel estimation.

	(1) (OLS)	(2) (MLM)	(3) (MLM)	(4) (MLM)	(5) (MLM)	(7) (MLM)	(9) (MLM)
Coalition	-0.064 (0.034)	-0.145* (0.066)					
Minority Government	-0.059 (0.042)	-0.141* (0.060)					
CINC	-9.617*** (1.551)	-8.009* (3.724)	-7.436* (3.702)	-10.255* (4.368)	-10.251* (4.382)	-10.768* (4.340)	-10.940* (4.843)
Democratic Target	-0.321*** (0.039)	-0.319*** (0.038)	-0.320*** (0.038)	-0.321*** (0.040)	-0.321*** (0.040)	-0.320*** (0.040)	-0.320*** (0.040)
Single-party Minority			-0.082 (0.089)	-0.090 (0.093)	-0.091 (0.094)	-0.094 (0.093)	-0.110 (0.097)
Minority Coalition			-0.275** (0.097)	-0.093 (0.146)	-0.099 (0.223)	0.005 (0.154)	-0.236 (0.167)
Minimum Winning Co.			-0.140 (0.084)	0.125 (0.113)	0.127 (0.119)	-0.024 (0.136)	0.018 (0.131)
Oversized Co.			-0.046 (0.090)	0.330* (0.131)	0.332* (0.139)	0.399** (0.136)	0.477** (0.152)
Pol. Incongruence ( <i>Range</i> )				-0.097*** (0.028)	-0.098** (0.031)	-0.138*** (0.035)	-0.054 (0.037)
Minority Co. * Pol. Inc.					0.003 (0.077)		
Minimum Win. * Pol. Inc.						0.101 (0.053)	
Oversized * Pol. Inc.							-0.111* (0.054)
Constant	2.526*** (0.048)	2.590*** (0.072)	2.555*** (0.081)	2.579*** (0.087)	2.579*** (0.087)	2.589*** (0.087)	2.594*** (0.092)
Country-Level Std. Error		0.133*** (0.034)	0.131*** (0.035)	0.149*** (0.040)	0.150*** (0.045)	0.148*** (0.040)	0.172*** (0.046)
Event-Level Std. Error		1.783*** (0.012)	1.783*** (0.012)	1.790*** (0.013)	1.790*** (0.013)	1.790*** (0.013)	1.789*** (0.013)
<i>Rho</i>		0.006	0.005	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.009
<i>N</i>	11211	11211	11211	9963	9963	9963	9963

Standard errors are in parentheses.  
\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Table 4.3a Commitment Intensity in Foreign Policy Behavior, Folded Goldstein Scores  
(IV: *Ideological range*)

	(6)	(8)	(10)
	(MLM)	(MLM)	(MLM)
CINC	-12.663 *	-13.570 **	-13.596 *
	(5.160)	(5.020)	(5.537)
Democratic Target	-0.316 ***	-0.317 ***	-0.317 ***
	(0.040)	(0.040)	(0.040)
Single-party Minority	-0.125	-0.111	-0.132
	(0.100)	(0.098)	(0.102)
Minority Coalition	-0.120	-0.062	-0.268
	(0.229)	(0.161)	(0.173)
Minimum Winning Co.	0.074	-0.054	-0.004
	(0.126)	(0.144)	(0.138)
Oversized Co.	0.279	0.352 *	0.410 **
	(0.144)	(0.139)	(0.159)
Pol. Incongruence ( <i>Range</i> )	-0.087 **	-0.128 ***	-0.056
	(0.033)	(0.037)	(0.038)
Minority Co. * Pol. Inc.	-0.018		
	(0.080)		
Minimum Win. * Pol. Inc.		0.095	
		(0.058)	
Oversized * Pol. Inc.			-0.091
			(0.060)
Years of EU Membership	0.001	0.002	0.002
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.003)
September 11, 2001	-0.036	-0.037	-0.025
	(0.063)	(0.062)	(0.063)
2003 Iraq Invasion	-0.106	-0.081	-0.084
	(0.089)	(0.090)	(0.091)
Bosnia War	0.008	-0.012	-0.003
	(0.064)	(0.064)	(0.065)
Kosovo War	-0.024	-0.034	-0.021
	(0.056)	(0.055)	(0.055)
Constant	2.623 ***	2.620 ***	2.620 ***
	(0.103)	(0.101)	(0.107)
Country-Level Std. Error	0.154 ***	0.146 ***	0.169 ***
	(0.047)	(0.041)	(0.045)
Event-Level Std. Error	1.790 ***	1.790 ***	1.789 ***
	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.013)
<i>Rho</i>	0.007	0.007	0.009
<i>N</i>	9963	9963	9963

Standard errors are in parentheses.  
\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Table 4.3b Commitment Intensity in Foreign Policy Behavior, Folded Goldstein Scores, with Additional Control Variables (IV: *Ideological range*)

The results reported in Table 4.3a show noticeable similarities to those presented in Table 4.2a. First, when measured in terms of the *ideological range* of parties in government based on their positions along the left-right political spectrum, *Policy Incongruence* continues to exert a negative effect on commitment intensity as observed in the previous set of results. Furthermore, Model 4 shows that oversized coalitions continue to have a positive effect on commitment when ideological range is used as a measure of policy incongruence. Of all majority coalitions, only oversized coalitions enjoy the diffusion of responsibility, through which they find the room to act more committed in their foreign policy behavior. Therefore, the results continue to provide partial support for *Hypothesis 3a* and reject *Hypothesis 3b*.

As for those models testing the refined veto players approach, Model 7 shows that using ideological range as a measure of policy incongruence does not have a significant amplifying effect on the commitment intensity of minimum winning coalitions. Unlike the results reported in Table 4.2a, here the interaction term (*Minimum Win.\*Pol. Inc.*) remains insignificant. Once again, *Hypothesis 4b* cannot be supported. On the other hand, the results of Model 9 continue to support *Hypothesis 4a*: as the ideological range expands in existing oversized coalitions, their commitment intensity decreases. The mechanism presented by Figure 4.1 earlier also applies here to explain this relationship.

Tables 4.3a and 4.3b show that *CINC* and *Democratic Target* are negative and significant, echoing the previous sets of results. The additional control variables that test the effects of international crises and European Union membership continue to remain insignificant in Table 4.3b, and they continue to affect the pre-control results. As Model 10 in Table 4.3b shows, the interaction term *Oversized\*Pol. Inc.* in Model 9 is no longer significant once the additional control variables are included. Ultimately, the analyses reported in Tables 4.3a and

4.3b conclude that when compared to the tests using the *ideological range* measure of policy incongruence, the *standard deviation* measure not only provides more statistical leverage for the results but results in larger substantive effects as well.

### **Policy Incongruence as “Center is Crossed”**

The final set of results use a third alternative measurement for the independent variable, *policy incongruence*. This measure looks at whether the government includes parties from the opposite sides of the political spectrum, shortly termed as “*center is crossed*.” The assumption here is that parties that come from the same side of the political spectrum—no matter how distant they might be—could still share similar positions on policy, whereas parties from the opposite sides might have more fundamental differences that could affect their commitment intensity. In other words, this measure of policy incongruence focuses on the quality of ideological differences rather than their quantity. Table 4.4a and 4.4b below present the results, first without and then with the additional control variables, respectively. Once again, the first three models in Table 4.4a report the same results as did Tables 4.2a and 4.3a. The rest of the models use the *center is crossed* measure for the *policy incongruence* variable and they are estimated with multilevel modeling.



	(1) (OLS)	(2) (MLM)	(3) (MLM)	(4) (MLM)	(5) (MLM)	(7) (MLM)	(9) (MLM)
Coalition	-0.064 (0.034)	-0.145* (0.066)					
Minority Government	-0.059 (0.042)	-0.141* (0.060)					
CINC	-9.617*** (1.551)	-8.009* (3.724)	-7.436* (3.702)	-7.963* (3.860)	-9.701* (3.777)	-6.826 (4.241)	-9.152* (4.075)
Democratic Target	-0.321*** (0.039)	-0.319*** (0.038)	-0.320*** (0.038)	-0.324*** (0.039)	-0.324*** (0.039)	-0.318*** (0.039)	-0.319*** (0.039)
Single-party Minority			-0.082 (0.089)	-0.089 (0.090)	-0.108 (0.089)	-0.096 (0.093)	-0.109 (0.092)
Minority Coalition			-0.275** (0.097)	-0.328** (0.114)	-0.541*** (0.147)	-0.229 (0.123)	-0.418*** (0.118)
Minimum Winning Co.			-0.140 (0.084)	-0.145 (0.095)	-0.083 (0.096)	-0.293** (0.108)	-0.198* (0.098)
Oversized Co.			-0.046 (0.090)	-0.019 (0.103)	0.035 (0.103)	-0.002 (0.108)	0.161 (0.112)
Pol. Inc. ( <i>Center Crossed</i> )				0.027 (0.074)	-0.069 (0.085)	-0.148 (0.089)	0.150 (0.079)
Minority Co. * Pol. Inc.					0.403* (0.177)		
Minimum Win. * Pol. Inc.						0.414*** (0.115)	
Oversized * Pol. Inc.							-0.616*** (0.126)
Constant	2.526*** (0.048)	2.590*** (0.072)	2.555*** (0.081)	2.562*** (0.082)	2.575*** (0.080)	2.567*** (0.087)	2.572*** (0.085)
Country-Level Std. Error		0.133*** (0.034)	0.131*** (0.035)	0.133*** (0.037)	0.125*** (0.036)	0.152*** (0.040)	0.144*** (0.040)
Event-Level Std. Error		1.783*** (0.012)	1.783*** (0.012)	1.785*** (0.012)	1.785*** (0.012)	1.784*** (0.012)	1.783*** (0.012)
<i>Rho</i>		0.006	0.005	0.006	0.005	0.007	0.006
<i>N</i>	11211	11211	11211	10423	10423	10423	10423

Standard errors are in parentheses.  
\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Table 4.4a Commitment Intensity in Foreign Policy Behavior, Folded Goldstein Scores  
(IV: *Center is Crossed*)

	(6)	(8)	(10)
	(MLM)	(MLM)	(MLM)
CINC	-12.184** (4.656)	-9.286 (5.031)	-11.683* (4.877)
Democratic Target	-0.320*** (0.039)	-0.318*** (0.039)	-0.319*** (0.039)
Single-party Minority	-0.121 (0.094)	-0.092 (0.098)	-0.117 (0.096)
Minority Coalition	-0.547*** (0.151)	-0.261* (0.127)	-0.450*** (0.121)
Minimum Winning Co.	-0.103 (0.102)	-0.278* (0.111)	-0.213* (0.103)
Oversized Co.	0.017 (0.106)	-0.004 (0.109)	0.150 (0.114)
Pol. Inc. ( <i>Center is Crossed</i> )	-0.061 (0.088)	-0.138 (0.094)	0.138 (0.081)
Minority Co. * Pol. Inc.	0.346 (0.181)		
Minimum Win. * Pol. Inc.		0.373** (0.125)	
Oversized * Pol. Inc.			-0.605*** (0.136)
Years of EU Membership	0.002 (0.002)	0.002 (0.002)	0.002 (0.002)
September 11, 2001	-0.065 (0.061)	-0.061 (0.061)	-0.029 (0.062)
2003 Iraq Invasion	-0.093 (0.086)	-0.049 (0.089)	-0.065 (0.087)
Bosnia War	-0.027 (0.060)	-0.048 (0.061)	-0.040 (0.060)
Kosovo War	-0.041 (0.052)	-0.033 (0.053)	-0.012 (0.053)
Constant	2.623*** (0.095)	2.603*** (0.100)	2.597*** (0.098)
Country-Level Std. Error	0.129*** (0.037)	0.147*** (0.040)	0.141*** (0.040)
Event-Level Std. Error	1.785*** (0.012)	1.784*** (0.012)	1.783*** (0.012)
<i>Rho</i>	0.005	0.007	0.006
<i>N</i>	10423	10423	10423

Standard errors are in parentheses.

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Table 4.4b Commitment Intensity in Foreign Policy Behavior, Folded Goldstein Scores, with Additional Control Variables (IV: *Center is Crossed*)

Unlike the previous results, it is first and foremost observed in Model 4 of Table 4.4a that *Policy Incongruence* has no independent effect on commitment intensity when it measures the presence of both left and right-wing political parties in a coalition. In fact, Model 4 also defeats the earlier finding on the positive and significant effect of oversized coalitions. Therefore, *Hypotheses 3a* and *3b* cannot be supported: when policy incongruence is accounted for in the form of a categorical variable such as *center is crossed*, majority coalitions have no positive, significant relationship with commitment intensity. Incidentally, the lack of statistical significance for the policy incongruence variable provides support for *Hypothesis 5a*: the negative and significant effect of minority coalitions on commitment intensity is consistent across all models in Table 4.4a and 4.4b except in Model 7.

The interaction terms in Table 4.4a, however, clearly show that having ideologically opposing parties in government alters the effects of each coalition type on their commitment intensity, supporting the previous results. Model 9 demonstrates that oversized coalitions show less commitment once they include parties from opposing ideological camps. The finding echoes what was presented in Tables 4.2a and 4.3a: when a left-wing (right-wing) party enters an existing oversized coalition that exclusively includes right wing (left-wing) parties, it decreases the intensity of the government's international commitments. Notice that the shift from a homogeneously right-wing or left-wing oversized coalition to an ideologically heterogeneous oversized coalition also leads to an expansion of its ideological range, as well as to an increase in the standard deviation of the mean ideological position of the coalition. *Hypothesis 4a* is supported for oversized coalitions, as earlier.

In Model 7, the negative and significant coefficient for the interaction term *Minimum Win.\*Pol. Inc.* shows that minimum winning coalitions with ideologically opposing parties

continue to act more committed than single-party majority governments, once again rejecting *Hypothesis 4b*. In addition to the alternative explanations presented above, one can also argue that minimalist coalitions that include left and right parties are often grand coalitions (Lijphart 1999), such as the Christian Democrat-Social Democrat governments in Germany or the Labor-Likud governments in Israel, which bring together the largest opposing parties to address the pressing policy issues that may force these governments to act more decisively and thus, more committed. Ultimately, then, further research is needed to explicate the exact causal mechanism that reflects the foreign policymaking dynamics inside minimum winning coalitions, given their ideological composition. In Chapter 6, the Dutch decision to provide support for the 2003 Iraq war will be discussed at length to answer this puzzle.

Finally, the positive and significant coefficient for the interaction term *Minority Co.\*Pol. Inc.* in Model 5 suggests that minority coalitions engage in more intense international commitments when they include both left and right-wing parties than when they include only right-wing or only left-wing parties. Here is why: suppose there is a parliament with 100 seats, distributed roughly equally among five political parties. Party A gets 18 seats, B gets 21, C gets 20, D gets 23, and E gets 18 seats. Suppose also that Party A is located at the far-left of the political spectrum, C is at the center, and E is located at the far-right. A government that includes parties B and D would result in a center-left/center-right minority coalition that held 44 percent of total parliamentary seats.

As explained earlier in Chapter 2, minority coalitions are assumed to be vulnerable to the parliamentary opposition due to their size. The BD coalition, however, is difficult to defeat as Party C has to convince *both* Party A and Party E—which are already at opposing ideological extremes—in order to enact a vote of no confidence against the incumbent coalition. Going back

to Hagan's (1993) expectations, the ACE opposition is composed of 'different parties'. As a result of their ideological diversity, the ACE opposition is unlikely to challenge the BD government, and therefore gives the BD coalition "policy viability" (Laver and Budge 1992: 5-8), suggesting that the government enjoys the room to make policy simply because the parliamentary opposition is now ideologically fragmented. Thus, the fragmented nature of the parliamentary opposition enables the BD coalition to make more intense international commitments. *Hypothesis 5b* is supported: when the ideological setup of a minority coalition divides the parliamentary opposition, its commitment intensity increases. Incorporating the alternative conceptualizations of policy incongruence and utilizing their relevant measures to build interaction terms in each set of tests were crucial in revealing this insight.<sup>65</sup>

Figure 4.3 below further illustrates this example.<sup>66</sup> Notice that the distance from Party C to any of the two incumbent parties is much smaller than to either of the opposition parties A and E, which facilitates the alternative scenario where C would even give outside support to the BD

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<sup>65</sup> An alternative measure for capturing the ideological diversity of the opposition parties would be measuring how fragmented the opposition is, or 'opposition fragmentation,' since "the number of parties and the ideological distances between parties are correlated" (Maeda 2009: 422, see also Sartori 1976, Ware 1996). Maeda (2009: 423) introduces a measure of opposition fragmentation by calculating the effective number of opposition parties (ENOP) similar to Laakso and Taagepera's (1979) measure of the effective number of parties (ENP). The expectation is that as ENOP increases the ideological diversity among opposition parties also increases and therefore the minority coalition finds greater room to intensify its foreign policy commitments. I do not choose to use this alternative measure for practical reasons. First, as Maeda (2009: 423) also admits, most sources "usually lump small parties into an 'other' category" which stops us from identifying the individual seat shares of each opposition party—a necessary component to calculate ENOP. As a result, severe data limitations prevent me from measuring opposition fragmentation for the countries in my dataset. Maeda's (2009) dataset only includes 17 parliamentary democracies across the world (including Japan, New Zealand, Australia and Canada) for the 1965-1997 period, which is why I cannot use his data for my study. Furthermore, my definition of 'government' goes beyond elected governments and also includes those cases where parties join or leave coalitions *during* an elected term, which complicates the calculation of ENOP for every change in government composition.

<sup>66</sup> The figure is for illustration purposes only and does not imply that parties are located at regular intervals along the political spectrum.

incumbency (say, on an *ad hoc* basis) as opposed to taking the more difficult road which requires collaborating with the rest of the parliamentary opposition parties to defeat it. As a matter of fact, crossing the political center implies that the preferences of those parties which end up within the ideological range that is created by the left-right crossover would, by definition, fall within the preference range of the government to begin with. In other words, the center party or parties that fall within the left-right crossover would not only have ideological difficulties to collaborate with the opposition, but may find the government a much closer partner ideologically to work with, especially when the government holds the minority and thus needs the help of other parliamentary parties to make policy.

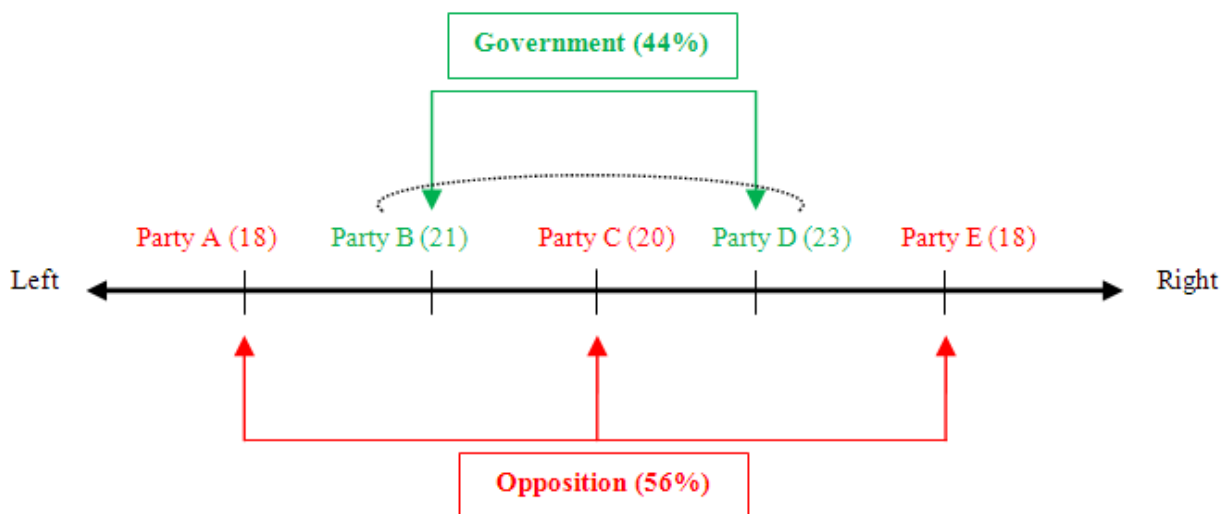


Figure 4.3 Minority Coalition and Fragmented Parliamentary Opposition

In sum, in any alternative setup where the minority coalition would include a left-wing and a right-wing political party, this coalition would hinder the chances of the parliamentary opposition parties to collaborate against the government due to ideological disparities. Furthermore, Party C or any other parties that end up within the ideological range of the minority coalition would likely be cooperating with the government parties vis-à-vis the rest of the

parliamentary opposition and therefore increase the commitment intensity of the incumbent minority coalition.

Notice that the operationalization of policy viability introduced in this study is fundamentally different than the initial formulation presented by Laver and Budge (1992). In the book, the authors focus on the core party in the legislature, i.e. the party that captures the median voter that is not necessarily located at the center of the left-right ideological spectrum, and argue that the core party must be in the government to achieve policy viability. Specifically, they argue that “in our [sic] terms, a minority government comprising only the core party would be ‘viable’” (Laver and Budge 1992: 5).

This argument is discussed at greater length in Laver and Schofield (1998: 79-80), who reiterate the critical importance of the core party<sup>67</sup> in achieving viability in a three-party legislature, arguing that the core party can singlehandedly maintain incumbency even though it enjoys a minority of parliamentary seats. They argue that to the extent that governments “divide the opposition by putting forward policy packages at the ‘centre’ of the policy space,” they are “making it impossible for the opposition to agree on an alternative and thereby allowing the government to manage with much less than a majority” (Laver and Schofield 1998: 81). In other words, policy viability explanation originally intends to focus on the policy position of the core party in the system vis-à-vis the other parties.

The argument introduced in this dissertation and the results presented in this chapter, however, look at those cases where the center party—which might very well be the core party in the legislature as far as Laver and Schofield’s (1998) formulation is concerned—is left *outside* a minority coalition government that includes parties located both at the left and the right of the

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<sup>67</sup> To be sure, in their illustration in the book (Laver and Schofield 1998: 80), the core party does seem like the center party.

political spectrum, regardless of where the core party is located. In other words, my finding and Figure 4.3 above suggest that even a minority coalition that does not include the center party can achieve policy viability and therefore commit more intensely than single-party majority governments at the international level.<sup>68</sup>

Moving on to the additional control variables reported in Table 4.4b, they remain insignificant as the case was in the previous sets of tests, though this time they hardly challenge the significance of the pre-control results. Similarly, the main control variables *CINC* and *Democratic Target* remain with the same substantive and statistical effects on commitment intensity. The *Rho* values, once again, continue to indicate very low intra-country variation, which increases confidence in the results by showing that the observations, that is, foreign policy events, are not correlated with each other in each country.

As explained in Chapter 3, the nature of the data makes it necessary to account for the latent effects of the countries from which the events are drawn, which is facilitated by the use of multilevel modeling. The *Rho* values in each set of results presented in this chapter show that between 0.5 and 0.9 per cent of the variation in commitment intensity across these models is due to country-level factors. Even though this is a very small effect substantively, using multilevel modeling and generating random effects allow us to calculate the baseline commitment intensity value for each country, regardless of the effects of the independent variables accounted for in the models.

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<sup>68</sup> It is important to remind that the coding of my variable is such that *center is crossed* also assumes a value of 1 if the government does not include parties from both the left and the right of the political spectrum but instead includes the center party (i.e. the party that scores 5 on the left-right spectrum). However, of the 12 minority coalitions that are coded 1 for crossing the center in the dataset, only three governments satisfy this condition. 77 events belong to these governments in my dataset of 17149 events, which correspond to 0.45 per cent of the entire sample. As such, those three minority coalitions are not expected to bias the results.



Statistical packages allow me to predict the random-effects generated by each country in the dataset.<sup>69</sup> Since ‘random-intercept’ models are utilized for the multilevel analyses in this chapter, these predicted random-effects are practically the random intercepts for each country. Adding these to the *Constant* term in the models, that is, the intercept that is estimated for the overall regression model, one can calculate the estimated intercepts for each country. Figure 4.4 illustrates these intercepts, based on Model 4 in Table 4.2a, where the models include the *Standard deviation* measure of *Policy Incongruence*.

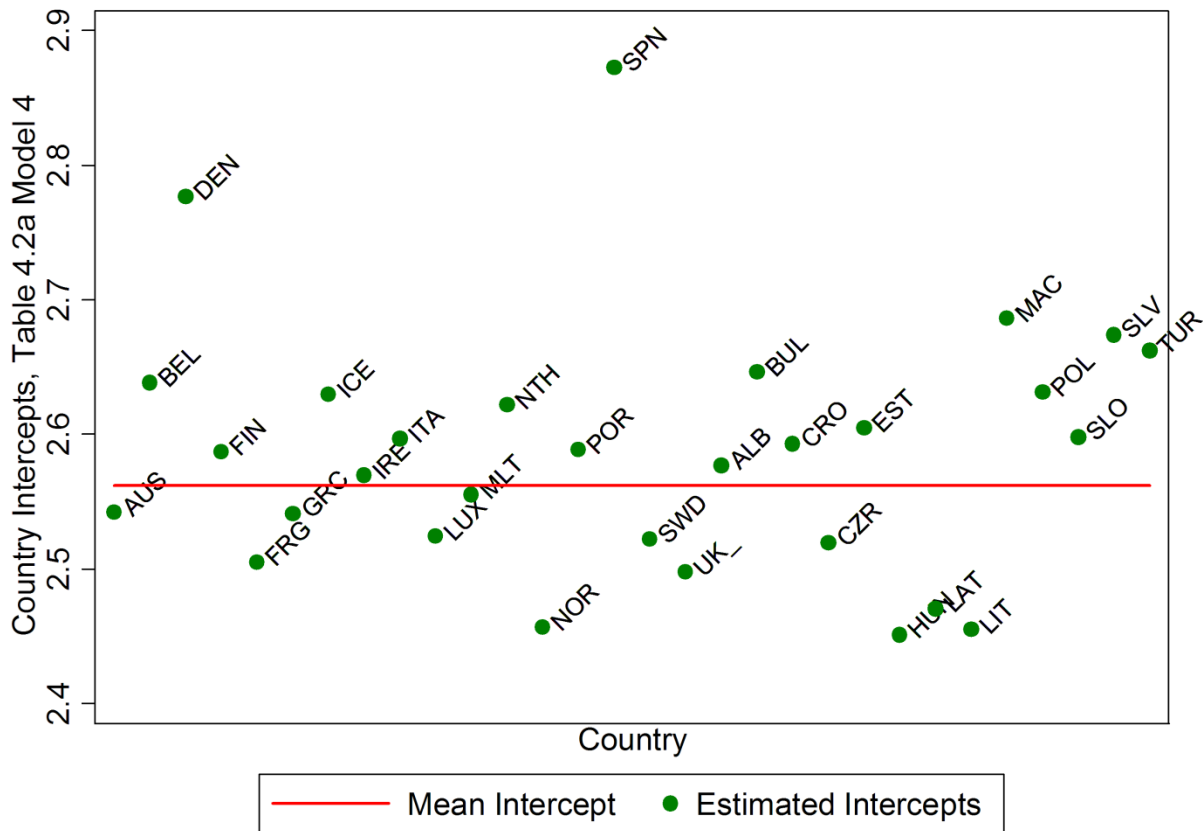


Figure 4.4 Estimated Country Intercepts based on Model 4 from Table 4.2a

<sup>69</sup> To do this, Stata 11’s predict u\*, reflects procedure is used.

Figure 4.4 suggests that leaving all the independent variables concerning government composition, material capabilities, democratic targets, international crises and years of European Union membership aside, most European countries have a baseline commitment range between 2.45 and 2.65 on the folded Goldstein scale. This range corresponds to somewhere around *formal complaint or protest* (-2.4) in terms of conflict behavior, or *give state invitation* (2.5), from a cooperative standpoint. In other words, Figure 4.4 shows that the country-level factors that are not accounted for explicitly in the models but still estimated through random-effects in my analyses exert an average baseline effect of 2.53 on commitment intensity.

Figure 4.4 also shows, however, that some countries still deviate considerably from the mean value denoted by the red line. While most countries remain within the 2.45 – 2.65 range; countries like Norway, Hungary, and Lithuania show notably lower levels of commitment intensity. On the contrary, Denmark has the second highest level of commitment intensity, leaving the effects of all other independent variables aside. The figure shows that as one of the few countries ruled exclusively by single-party governments, Spain has the highest level of commitment intensity in the period between 1994 and 2004.

Figure 4.4 provides an important visual leverage to argue for the need to support the quantitative findings with more detailed case insights in order to understand how countries could have a differentiating effect on commitment intensity. As it will be explained in Chapter 5 in detail, for instance, qualitative accounts of Danish foreign policy argue that “all Danish governments since the end of the Cold War have declared that they have conducted an ‘active’ foreign policy” (Larsen 2009: 219). This trend was called “active internationalism” (Petersen 2004) during the first decade of the post-Cold War period. Further, the country became even more proactive in the period that followed September 11, 2001, which was referred to as

“offensive Danish foreign policy” (Larsen 2009: 220). Clearly, these assessments of Danish foreign policy attest to the increase in the commitment intensity of Denmark in this post-Cold War period as a foreign policy vision, regardless of the composition of its executive branch. As such, in-depth qualitative analyses not only contextualize the results of statistical tests but lend confidence in the quantitative findings, as illustrated in Figure 4.4.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has provided a quantitative analysis to investigate the differential effects of government composition on the intensity of international commitments across parliamentary regimes in Europe during the post-Cold War era, specifically between 1994 and 2004.

The major conclusion of this chapter is that there is no single path that explains the relationship between the governments and their international commitments: it is impossible to generalize on the intensity of commitments simply by looking at whether the government includes one or many parties, or whether or not it enjoys a parliamentary majority. Instead, coalition types, and the extent of policy incongruence inside these coalitions do much of the explanation, even when state-level characteristics such as the national capabilities that these governments command or the regime characteristics of the target states are taken into account. This chapter therefore concludes that a more nuanced specification of government composition is necessary to explicate the particular mechanisms through which these governments decide how much to commit.

A number of findings help illuminate this conclusion further. For instance, even though the initial set of findings show that the ‘veto players’ mechanism explains the commitment intensity of coalitions in general, this explanation cannot be sustained once the ideological

differences among the coalition partners are accounted for. In fact, once the policy incongruence inside the coalition is accounted for, the empirical analyses reveal that an alternative mechanism—clarity of responsibility—is at work, specifically for oversized coalitions.

Indeed, the results presented in this chapter demonstrate that *only oversized coalitions*, that is, those coalitions that include more parties than necessary to maintain a parliamentary majority, are associated with more intense commitments in their foreign policy behavior compared to single-party governments. This relationship is revealed, however, only when the policy incongruence between coalition parties are controlled for. This result is robust against the different specifications of this key independent variable, such as the *standard deviation of party positions from the mean position of the coalition* (Warwick 1992) and the *ideological range* (Tsebelis 1995, 1999) measures.

This finding on oversized coalitions challenges the earlier analysis by Kaarbo and Beasley (2008). In their study, the authors find that coalitions act more “extreme” as the number of parties in government increases. However, contrary to their expectations, their findings also indicate that stronger coalitions engage in more nonverbal (i.e. high-intensity) behavior than verbal (i.e. low-intensity) behavior. Together, their conclusions clearly indicate that more committed behavior is a result of having more parties in government, *which also commands higher seat shares*. This is an obvious characteristic of oversized coalitions, indeed a conclusion of this project. In other words, this study illustrates the merits of implementing a more succinct conceptualization of coalitions to study foreign policy behavior, so that we can capture the specific mechanisms through which they behave differently than single-party majority coalitions.

Another key finding of this chapter is that even though oversized coalitions engage in more intense international commitments than other majority coalitions *ceteris paribus*, their

commitment intensity decreases once the level of policy incongruence increases in existing oversized coalitions with the inclusion of additional, ideologically diverse parties. Consistent across the different specifications of the policy incongruence variable, this finding suggests that as governments with an already existing surplus of parties grow larger and ideologically more diverse, disagreements begin to jeopardize their policy-making capabilities, working against the expectations of the 'clarity of responsibility' mechanism and ultimately resulting in lower levels of international commitment.

Next, the findings show that the commitment intensity of minimum winning coalitions cannot be readily explained either by the veto players or the clarity of responsibility theory. It seems that minimum winning coalitions act more committed than single-party majority governments when the ideological disagreements among the coalition parties grow. This is counterintuitive, as one would expect the coalition partners to use their veto power and either block or water down those policy proposals that require more commitment if they cannot agree at a very basic, ideological level. On the other hand, it is well-known that alternative explanations that might contextualize and illuminate this outcome are discussed frequently in the literature. Some of these explanations include logrolling, blackmail potential of the junior partners, or strategizing around intra-party fragmentation to build *ad hoc* alliances in the government to make policy (Clare 2010, Kaarbo 1996a, 1996b, Snyder 1991). To contribute to this debate and expand on this surprising finding on minimum winning coalitions, Chapter 6 will provide a qualitative analysis of the 2003 Dutch decision to support the war in Iraq.

A third conclusion of this chapter concerns minority coalitions. Contrary to the conventional wisdom that minority coalitions always remain at a size disadvantage and engage in moderate foreign policy behavior, the results of the analyses presented here conclude that

minority coalitions can overcome their parliamentary vulnerabilities if their ideological setup leaves the parliamentary opposition fragmented. To reveal this relationship, the empirical analyses were designed by building on the earlier theoretical work by Hagan (1993) and Laver and Budge (1992). As discussed in Chapter 3 in greater detail, the analyses utilized a third measure of policy incongruence, *center is crossed*, to test whether a minority coalition's ideological heterogeneity results in the ideological fragmentation of the opposition, therefore enabling the government to engage in more intense foreign policy commitments compared to single-party majority governments. The results reported in the present chapter have supported this expectation quantitatively, demonstrating that the policy incongruence of a minority coalition measured as the participation of left- and right-wing parties helps fragment the parliamentary opposition ideologically, thereby allowing the government to increase the intensity of their international commitments.

This is a novel finding that brings minority coalitions back in to the debate in the literature that has so far focused almost exclusively on the differences among majority governments. To further illuminate how minority coalitions make foreign policy commitments at varying levels of ideological composition and demonstrate the 'policy viability' mechanism qualitatively, Chapter 5 will utilize two foreign policy episodes from post-Cold War Denmark, specifically the decisions to participate in the 1990 war in the Gulf and the 2003 war in Iraq.

The results of this chapter also suggest that the EU's effect on national foreign policies in the region, or the major international crises that took place in this decade are insignificant factors in explaining the intensity of commitments in foreign policy behavior during this period. This is an important finding that challenges the fast-growing literature on the Europeanization of foreign policy and should certainly alert those scholars whose work focus on the ways in which

harmonization takes place between national and European foreign policies (Wong and Hill 2011).

Finally, from a methodological point of view, the results of this chapter demonstrate that multilevel modeling (i.e. hierarchical linear modeling) addresses several problems associated with multi-country events datasets and yields results which would have remained unclear if classical regression models were used. Moreover, using multilevel estimation techniques provides information regarding the baseline effects of countries on commitment intensity, further allowing us to contextualize the results of the regression analyses. As illustrated on Figure 4.4, some countries exert a greater baseline effect on commitment intensity than others, regardless of the independent variables that are accounted for in the models. That is to say, all else being considered, some countries engage in more intense commitments than others due to factors that are unaccounted for in the models.

The baseline values presented in Figure 4.4 also constitute a useful next step in multi-method research designs. Knowing these values informs the researcher on the systematic, categorical differences across the countries and therefore allows for a more informed case selection process prior to designing qualitative research. For instance, the researcher can focus on those countries that are closer to the mean in order to eliminate the possibility that highly committed foreign policy behaviors are merely the results of historical or other unaccounted factors that are associated with that country. Similarly, the researcher can also focus on an outlier country to observe how the intense commitment behaviors are in fact the result of a multitude of individual-, domestic- or international-level factors that pertain to that country.

The next two chapters take a qualitative approach to respond to this discussion by introducing a series of structured-focused case study comparisons of Denmark's 1990 decision to

participate in the Gulf war and its 2003 decision to join the war coalition in Iraq, as well as the Dutch decision to support the 2003 Iraq war, respectively.



## CHAPTER 5

### **‘REACHING ACROSS THE AISLE’: POLICY VIABILITY AND DANISH INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS**

*“Any line of thought going towards Denmark promoting itself through military means far away from our own neighborhood goes against deep-rooted Social Democratic instincts. For that reason, we have also said clearly “no” to all suggestions from the centre-right politicians about letting NATO act outside the North Atlantic area, as stipulated in the Atlantic Treaty.”*

Social Democratic Party Leader Hans Haekkerup, August 13, 1990<sup>70</sup>

*“Only the Americans have the military strength to disarm Saddam and liberate Iraq. But we have an obligation to help. We cannot just sail under a flag of convenience and let others fight for freedom and peace. There has in fact been too much of that kind in the past in Denmark. If we mean anything seriously about our democratic values, then we should also be ready to make a small contribution to the international coalition.”*

Liberal Party Leader and Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen, March 26, 2003<sup>71</sup>

Foreign policy behaviors such as the commitments to send a naval corvette to the Gulf or a submarine and escort troops to the Iraq war as Denmark did in 1990 and 2003, respectively, are the outcomes of a complicated series of debates in democratic regimes. These are the behavioral outcomes of deliberations among actors in parliamentary democracies, foremost of which are the political parties in government: they must synchronize their policy preferences to formulate their international behavior, which would communicate the commitment intensity of their regimes.

To explain the intensity of international commitments in parliamentary regimes, this dissertation has proposed the simultaneous study of the mathematical and the ideological composition of the parties in government as two key domestic politics variables. Chapter 4 has

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<sup>70</sup> Quoted in Olesen (2012: 28).

<sup>71</sup> Quoted in Laybourn (2003).

presented a nuanced, quantitative approach to measure the independent and interactive effects of the size and the ideological diversity of multiparty governments on their commitment intensity. The quantitative analyses have concluded that coalition governments are significantly different from single-party governments in their commitment behavior in general. More importantly, however, the analyses have demonstrated that coalitions show significant differences *among each other* regarding their effects on commitment intensity, once the variation in their size and ideological diversity are accounted for. As such, the results of the previous chapter attest to the importance of unpacking coalitions and scrutinizing their major defining characteristics to explain the foreign policy commitments of parliamentary democracies.

One central finding of the quantitative analyses in Chapter 4 concerns the ‘policy viability’ of minority coalitions, particularly when they fragment the parliamentary majority by ‘reaching across the aisle’ and including parties from both the left and the right of the political spectrum. The large-N analysis has demonstrated that the commitment intensity of foreign policy behavior increases when a minority coalition shifts from a ‘pure-right’ or a ‘pure-left’ government to a ‘heterogeneous’ left-right government by crossing the center of the political spectrum. This finding supports the ‘policy viability’ and ‘fragmented opposition’ explanations, discussed in Chapter 2.

Moving forward, it is necessary to explicate the mechanism that justifies this relationship to argue that it can be observed beyond statistical association. The chapter therefore asks: *how does the ideological composition of minority coalitions influence their foreign policy commitments?* What is the link between the fragmented parliamentary opposition and the increase in commitment intensity in minority coalition settings? Furthermore, it is necessary to test whether the ‘policy viability’ explanation performs strongly against alternative explanations.

Can a minority coalition that does not cross the center of the political spectrum still engage in high-intensity commitments at the international level? What are the factors that could influence such an outcome?

These questions are important for two reasons. First, they shift the focus away from majority governments and open up a new pathway to studying coalition foreign policy, this time with a focus on minority coalitions. Second, they reject the conventional wisdom that minority coalitions are categorically vulnerable vis-à-vis the parliamentary opposition due to their size disadvantage. Following the ‘policy viability’ explanation and the regression results presented in Chapter 4, this chapter seeks to show that minority coalitions may well circumvent their size disadvantage and make international commitments such as participating in war coalitions as long as the composition of their coalition leaves the parliamentary opposition ideologically fragmented.

This chapter addresses these questions by introducing a qualitative analysis of international commitments. Using the method of structured-focused comparison, the chapter demonstrates the relationship between minority coalitions and the intensity of their international commitments in Denmark, while accounting for the variation in the government’s policy incongruence. The chapter also evaluates a number of alternative explanations, discussed in Chapter 2, against the ‘government composition’ explanation. These include logrolling, public opinion, threat to national security, and political leadership. The policy-making context in Denmark alongside its historical foreign policy framework will also be discussed throughout the chapter as two contextual variables that could further influence these relationships.

The least-likely case status of Denmark due to its position in the international system as a small state (Doeser 2013), as well as its institutional stability as a country that has been

historically ruled by minority coalitions, makes this country a great case for analyzing the ‘policy viability’ explanation. Moreover, the outlier position of Denmark among other European parliamentary democracies regarding its baseline commitment intensity makes it a puzzling case. As Figure 4.4 has shown in Chapter 4, Denmark exerts the greatest baseline effect on commitment intensity, whose reasons are yet to be discovered.

The chapter focuses on two cases of international commitment. First, the ‘policy viability’ and the ‘fragmented opposition’ explanations will be evaluated with the crucial case analysis of the Danish decision to send the naval corvette<sup>72</sup> *Olfert Fischer* to the Gulf in September 1990, which was possible only because the ideological formation of the government ended what is known in Danish foreign policy as the “footnote policy era” and marked the beginning of the country’s international activism. In other words, the 1990 case will help demonstrate how the ‘fragmented parliamentary opposition’ gave ‘policy viability’ to the Danish minority coalition and led to a change in its foreign policy behavior.

The chapter will then use Denmark’s 2003 decision to participate in the Iraq War coalition as a deviant, over-determined case. The 2003 decision demonstrates that minority coalitions can continue to engage in high-intensity commitments such as joining war coalitions, even when their ideological composition does not lead to a ‘fragmented opposition’ in the parliament. Instead, the 2003 case will demonstrate that a number of other factors, such as logrolling among the parties inside and outside the government that belong to the same side of the political spectrum, national threat perceptions, and, to some extent, political leadership

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<sup>72</sup> A *naval corvette* “is a small and fast naval vessel ranking in size below a frigate,” and is “usually armed with torpedoes, missiles and machine guns and have displacement from 500 to 1000 tons. They are performing antisubmarine, anti-aircraft, and coastal-patrol duties in the world’s small navies.” (Source: maritime-connector.com, accessed June 6, 2014).

together play an important role in accounting for the international commitments of minority coalitions.

The chapter proceeds as follows. In the first section, I give an overview of the Danish political system alongside a discussion of Danish foreign policy orientations throughout the post-Cold War years, particularly what is known as Danish foreign policy activism. Next, I move on to the case analyses. The first section analyzes the 1990 Gulf War, followed by the second section on the 2003 Iraq War. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the findings and their implications.

### **Politics of Denmark: A Primer**

Denmark is a small Nordic country ruled by parliamentary democracy, with membership in the European Union since 1973 and in NATO since 1949. The country adopts proportional representation (PR) with a national electoral threshold of two percent, resulting in parliaments with several parties from the left, center and right of the political spectrum (Damgaard 2000).

Writing in the late 1990s, Elklit (1999: 63) has argued that “for more than two decades, all Danish governments were minority governments.” Specifically, between 1971 and 1993, six of the thirteen minority governments were coalitions (Elklit 1999: 63). Echoing this trend, the present dataset also shows that all five governments in Denmark between 1994 and 2004 were minority coalitions, clearly indicating that minority coalition politics is the rule rather than the exception in this country.

The high level of parliamentary fractionalization in Denmark yields “extreme pluralism with six to seven significant parties” that marked the party system since 1973.<sup>73</sup> As with most party systems in Europe, these parties fall along the classic left-right political spectrum. They include the left-wing Social Democratic Party (SD), “the largest party in parliament since 1924,” the Social Liberal Party (RL, previously known as the Radical Liberal Party), the Center Democrats (CD), and right-wing parties such as the Christian People’s Party (CPP), the Liberal Party (L), the Conservative People’s Party (Con), and more recently the Danish People’s Party (DPP) (Damgaard: 2000: 233-35). These are joined by parties at the extreme right such as the Progress Party and, at the extreme left, such as the Left Socialists, Danish Communist Party, and the Socialist People’s Party.

Of these parties, the Social Democrats, Social Liberals, Centre Democrats, Conservatives and the Christian Democrats have historically been the most relevant parties for government formation. Elklit (1999: 65) shows that between 1968 and 1996, Social Liberals participated in five out of 17 governments, all of which were coalitions. Similarly, Conservatives participated in six coalition governments in this time period, often alongside the Liberals, the Centre Democrats, and the Christian People’s Party. Most dramatically, the Social Democrats participated in 10 out of 17 governments in this period, including when they enjoyed the single-party government status six times until 1982, when the long hiatus of Social Democratic victories began and had lasted until 1993 (Elklit 1999: 65). For the post-Cold War period, the quantitative dataset used for this study also shows that the Social Democrats were in four consecutive governing coalitions

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<sup>73</sup> Elklit (1999: 64) argues that the 1973 election is coined in the literature as the ‘earthquake election,’ when all of the parties in the previous parliament received devastating results (Fitzmaurice 1981: 23), indicating voters’ loss of heart with the existing parties. Elklit (1999: 64) explains that altered the Danish political landscape “by adding entirely new elements to the party system, by changing its overall configuration, and by gradually letting the parties—new and old—find their places in either the central or the peripheral parts of the party system.”

between 1993 and 2001, until the Liberals took over under the leadership of Anders Fogh Rasmussen following the parliamentary election in November 2001.

Perhaps due to the institutional conditions that facilitate party fractionalization, parties that enter into coalitions enjoy high level of party cohesion in Denmark (Damgaard 2000: 232-35). For example, Chapel Hill Expert Survey data from 1999 to 2006 (Hooghe et al. 2010, Steenbergen and Marks 2007) show that dissent in the leadership of Danish political parties on the issue of European integration was noticeably low in 1999, and was virtually nonexistent by 2006, indicating strong levels of party cohesion.<sup>74</sup> In other words, intra-party fractionalization does not threaten either the government's ability to make policy or the opposition parties' capacity to block legislation. This insight certainly adds confidence to the analyses that follow, which measure 'policy incongruence' as a matter of party position regardless of factional divergences *within* these parties.

The locus of foreign policy in Denmark is the governing cabinet, which makes the governing parties central for this country's formulation and execution of foreign policy. However, as Jakobsen (2012: 3) explains, "the government is constitutionally obliged to seek consent from the Parliament when it considers participating in operations involving the use of force beyond self-defense," and since 1990, "all major troop contributions regardless of mission type are submitted to a vote in parliament." In this sense, the government's ability to ensure that its foreign policy agenda is not obstructed by the parliamentary opposition as well as its opportunities to enter into alliances with the opposition parties for additional support when

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<sup>74</sup> On a scale of 1 (complete party unity) to 5 (party leadership facing major opposition from the party activists), Danish political parties scored less than 3 in the 1999 iteration of the CHES dataset. In the 2006 iteration of the dataset, the dissent scale ranged from 0 (complete unity) to 10 (extreme divisions), where the party with the highest level of dissent on EU integration, Socialist People's Party, scored 4.1 (Hooghe et al. 2010, Steenbergen and Marks 2007).

necessary becomes extremely crucial to commit resources to participate in international military operations. As I demonstrate below, the government was able to send the corvette to the Gulf in 1990 because it was able to obstruct the opposition by entering into a coalition agreement with the Social Liberals. Similarly, in 2003, the Rasmussen government aligned with the opposition Danish People's Party that allowed the former to garner a majority of votes in the parliament and pass the Iraq war bill.

### **Danish Foreign Policy in the post-Cold War Period**

“What's the use of it?” asked Viggo Hørrup, a member of the traditionally anti-militarist Social Liberal Party, in 1883, echoing Denmark's historical skepticism toward the utility of military force (Rasmussen 2005: 67) and “Denmark's alleged military impotence vis-à-vis the newly united Germany” at the time (Branner 2013: 160).

Conceptualized by Danish foreign policy scholars as Danish ‘defeatism’ or ‘cosmopolitanism’ (Rasmussen 2005), the pacifist and non-militarist vision of Danish foreign policy continued until the final years of the Cold War. “The traditional image of Denmark as a state whose main priority was to promote a politics of non-involvement, uncommitted alliance and restraints in international affairs” (Pedersen 2012: 342) gave way to a new foreign policy orientation that championed international activism by the 1990s.

Not surprisingly, this shift in Danish foreign policy coincided with international systemic change. With the demise of the Soviet Union and the end of bipolarity “the external pressure on Denmark disappeared” (Pedersen 2012: 334), where the country found the room to move “from reactive to active adaptation” (Due-Nielsen and Petersen 1995, quoted in Pedersen 2012: 334). This was also a necessary step in redefining Denmark's role in the new international system,



especially vis-à-vis its relations with the United States (Mouritzen 2007). To that end, “Denmark had to undertake new and independent initiatives as a means to make herself heard and thus compensate for her reduced status” (Branner 2013: 145).

The change in the international balance of power also meant new security challenges for Denmark. Following the end of the Cold War, the Danish Defense Commission released a white paper that argued “after the ‘direct’ threat of a Soviet attack had gone, the ‘indirect’ threat to peace and stability in Europe was the most important Danish security concern,” where the European Union and NATO assumed greatest responsibility in providing a secure international environment (Danish Defense Commission 1998, quoted in Rasmussen 2005: 77). The next phase in Danish foreign policy, therefore, called for the development of a new vision where activism would define the Danish response to regional and international security challenges as well as the reassessment of the country’s relations with NATO and the EU in the new security environment. This transformation was not out of sync with other NATO or EU members, where “the focus on institutions was gradually replaced by a focus on capabilities” (Rasmussen 2005: 78).

In this new security environment, however, Danish foreign policy priorities aligned far more closely with NATO than with the European Union. Larsen (2005: 87) argues that “although the EU is presented as the organizational point of departure and frame for Danish foreign policy...the bilateral relationship to the US/NATO remains crucial for the hardest security threats,” suggesting that Denmark’s foreign policy preferences align more closely with the US/NATO than the EU as far as security policies are concerned. This is unsurprising considering the fact that Denmark is the only member-state that has opted out from the EU’s Common Security and Defense pillar as early as 1992 by signing the Edinburgh Agreement (Danish

Ministry of Defense 2013). Especially in the context of the 2003 Iraq war, Prime Minister Rasmussen clearly expressed his preference for the American security capabilities over Europe's by arguing that "Denmark's security is better guaranteed by a superpower in North America than by the fragile balance of power between the UK, Germany and France" (quoted in Larsen 2005: 87). Ultimately, the EU has been a secondary resort for Danish security policies institutionally as well as politically.

Danish foreign policy scholars agree that the first major step signaling the transformation of Danish foreign policy in the 1990s was the participation in the naval blockade in the Gulf in 1990 with the naval corvette *Olfert Fischer* following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait (Branner 2013, Pedersen 2012, Rasmussen 2005, Olesen 2012). Indeed, it was a major historical moment for this country considering the "period of wide-ranging shift in the international system" (Doeser 2013: 583), when the Cold War dynamics were still in place. This was followed by a series of peacekeeping and humanitarian missions, including those in Yugoslavia in 1992, Bosnia in 1995, Albania in 1998, and Kosovo in 1999 (Pedersen 2012: 338).

The second major inflection point in Danish foreign policy after the end of the Cold War came in 2001 following the September 11 terrorist attacks. By 2003, 'soft activism' was replaced with 'hard activism' (Branner 2013) and "an acceptance of military force as an effective means in its own right" (Rasmussen 2005: 82) was vociferously supported by Fogh Rasmussen and his Liberal Party that came to power in November 2001. Some scholars referred to this shift as "offensive Danish foreign policy," which suggested that "Denmark should take a stance on, and be directly engaged in, the big defining issues in international politics and security" (Larsen 2009: 220). Denmark's offensive foreign policy was crystallized in the decision to join the war in

Iraq as one of the first countries to sign the “Letter of Eight” and send military assistance to the region in 2003 (Pedersen 2012, see also Larsen 2009).

In sum, Danish foreign policy in the post-Cold War era has undergone two major policy shifts. The first shift took place at the turn of the decade in 1990 from cosmopolitanism to activism, emphasizing international institutions as well as closer cooperation with the UN and NATO toward international peacekeeping and humanitarian missions. The second shift came with the September 11 attacks and stressed the importance of Denmark’s alliance with the United States, promoting the active use of military capabilities to respond to the new international security challenges (Pedersen 2012). The analyses below should therefore be read against this historical backdrop.

Table 5.1 presents a summary of these cases.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Government and opposition parties’ data come from the Inter-Parliamentary Union Database on Denmark. [http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2087\\_arc.htm](http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2087_arc.htm), accessed June 9, 2014.

	<i>TIMEFRAME for GULF WAR 1990</i>			<i>IRAQ WAR 2003</i>
	<b>December 1981 - January 1984</b>	<b>January 1984 – June 1988</b>	<b>June 1988 – December 1990</b>	<b>November 2001 – January 2005</b>
<b>Coalition parties</b>	Conservatives (KF) – Liberals (V) – Centre Democrats (CD) – Christian People’s Party (KRF)	Conservatives (KF) – Liberals (V) – Centre Democrats (CD) – Christian People’s Party (KRF)	Conservatives (KF) – Liberals (V) – Social Liberals (RV)	Conservatives (KF) – Liberals (V)
<b>Coalition type</b>	Minority	Minority	Minority	Minority
<b>Opposition parties</b>	Social Democrats (SD) – Social Liberals (RV) – Socialist People’s Party (SF) – Left Socialists	Social Democrats (SD) – Social Liberals (RV) – Socialist People’s Party (SF) – Left Socialists Progress Party (FP)	Social Democrats (SD) – Socialist People’s Party (SF) – Centre Democrats (CD) – Christian People’s Party (KRF) – Progress Party (FP)	Social Democrats (SD) – <i>Danish People's Party</i> (DPP) – Conservatives (KF) – Socialist People's Party (SF) – Social Liberals (RV) – Unity List (EL) – Christian People's Party (KRF)
<b>Policy incongruence (Center is crossed)</b>	0 (Pure right-wing coalition, left-wing opposition)	0 (Pure right-wing coalition, predominantly left-wing opposition)	1 (Center is crossed)	0 (Government cooperates with the DPP, achieves majority)
<b>Standing</b>	Elected government	Elected government	Elected government	Elected government
<b>Commitment intensity</b>	<i>‘Footnote policy era’</i> : Danish partnership with NATO is obstructed by the parliamentary opposition		Denmark sends naval ship to the blockade in the Gulf, initiated by NATO members	Denmark signs ‘the letter of eight’, sends ship to participate in the war coalition

Table 5.1 Government Composition and Commitment Intensity in Denmark, 1982 – 1990 and 2003

## **The End of the ‘Footnote Policy’ and the 1990 Gulf War**

The most significant opportunity for Denmark to show foreign policy activism in the aftermath of the Cold War came with the 1990 Gulf War. Following Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait and the subsequent trade embargo sanctioned by the UN in August 1990, several NATO members began to prepare for a naval blockade. In the midst of a fierce debate among Danish political parties about the necessity of a UN mandate to join the operation, the blockade was sanctioned by the UN by the end of August 1990. The Danish government decided to send the *Olfert Fischer* to the Gulf on September 12, 1990. The corvette remained in the region after the war broke in January 1991, but it did not actively participate in the armed confrontation (Doeser 2013: 589-592).

Denmark’s decision to participate in the naval blockade against Iraq in 1990 was possible only because the Danish ‘footnote policy era’ had ended in 1988. It is therefore necessary to go back to the 1980s and understand the politics of the ‘footnote’ era. The “footnote policy era” began when a right-wing minority government that included the Conservatives, Liberals, the Center Party and the Christian People’s Party came to power following the September 1982 elections (Doeser 2013). The government led by Prime Minister Poul Schluter occupied a total of 66 seats in the 179-seat *Folketing*, the Danish parliament, whereas the remaining seats belonged to the parties on the left, including the Social Democrats, Social Liberals, Socialist People’s Party and the Left Socialists. This government survived the 1984 elections and continued its term until the elections in 1988.

The ‘footnote policy era’ is a great example to evaluate the ‘policy viability’ explanation as it illustrates how an ideologically unified parliamentary opposition can obstruct the minority coalition’s foreign policy behavior. During the six-year period between 1982 and 1988, the government faced with an ‘alternative majority’ in the parliament (Doeser 2013, Pedersen 2012)

that continuously opposed the former's foreign policy agenda, particularly regarding its close relations with NATO and the United States (Doeser 2011). The most notable way in which this took place was in the form of "forcing the government to include dissenting footnotes in NATO communiqués" (Doeser 2013: 587), a collective parliamentary opposition movement led by the Social Democrats (Pedersen 2012). Doeser (2011: 228) notes that "the alternative majority passed 23 resolutions between 1982 and 1988 that were inconsistent with NATO policies." It is argued that these footnotes not only caused the government to decrease its political role and commitments in NATO but also invited backlash from the major players in the Organization (Pedersen 2012: 344).

The constant tension between the right-wing government and the left-wing opposition during the footnote policy era points to the significance of government composition in explaining foreign policy behavior. First, the minority status of Schluter's governing coalition in the parliament put it at a mathematical disadvantage and limited the cabinet's ability to pass legislation towards building a stronger relationship with NATO. More importantly, however, the ideological composition of the government as a pure right-wing coalition resulted in a similarly homogenous opposition. Figure 5.1 below illustrates the distribution of parties in the Danish parliament by 1982, with the parties' left-right positions reported in parentheses. Governing parties are displayed in black and the opposition parties are in gray.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> The left-right party position values are from 1984 and come from the Ray-Marks-Steenbergen (Ray 1999; Steenbergen and Marks 2007) dataset. The original values vary from 0 to 1, where 0.5 denotes the center. To maintain consistency with the previous chapters and the data used in Chapter 4, I multiplied the values by 10. The values now range between 0 and 10, 10 being far-right, 0 being far-left and 5 denoting the center.

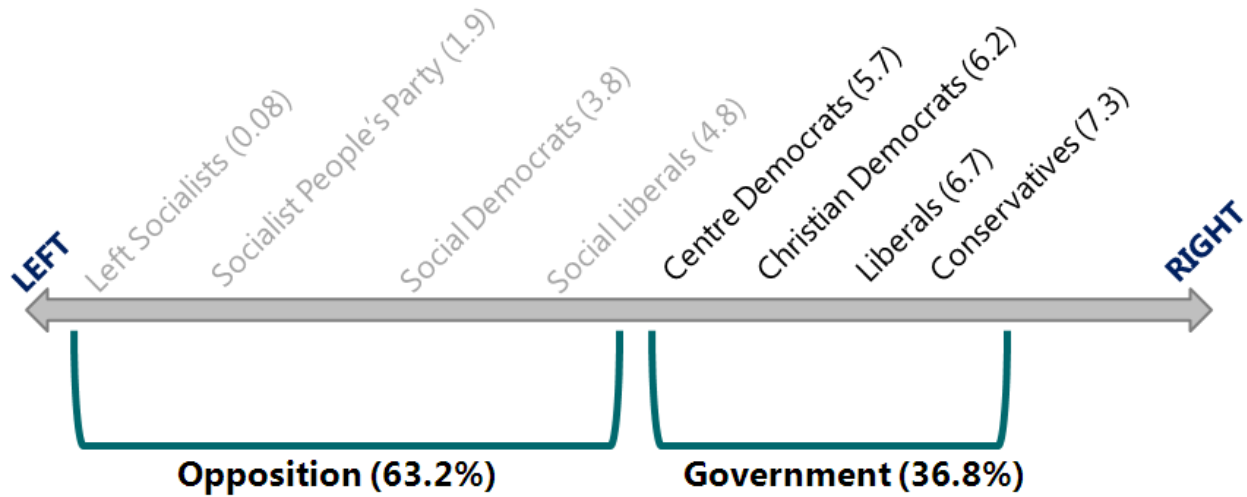


Figure 5.1 Danish *Folketing*, 1982

To use Hagan's (1993) terms, the ideological composition of the minority government in Denmark created a parliament where the majority opposition seats were *not* controlled by parties from different ideological backgrounds, as Figure 5.1 shows. Indeed, all opposition parties from 1982 until 1988 belonged to the left of the political spectrum and were NATO-skeptic (with the exception of the far-right Progress Party that joined the parliament in 1984). The ideological composition of the government resulted in an absence of policy viability and allowed the opposition parties to easily come together and develop an even stronger response to the government's foreign policy towards NATO.

*Ideological Composition:* By 1988, the government led by the Conservatives and Liberals since 1982 had been increasingly frustrated with the ability of the 'alternative majority' to block foreign policy and impede the government's willingness to commit, especially within the framework of NATO. Indeed, the major reason behind the government's call for elections that year was yet another foreign policy deadlock regarding nuclear weapons in Danish waters (Doeser 2011). The elections were held in May 1988 and resulted in a three-party government

with Conservatives and Liberals, and more interestingly, with Social Liberals. Figure 5.2 below illustrates the ideological distribution of parliamentary parties following the elections, where the governing parties are displayed in black and the opposition parties are in gray.<sup>77</sup>

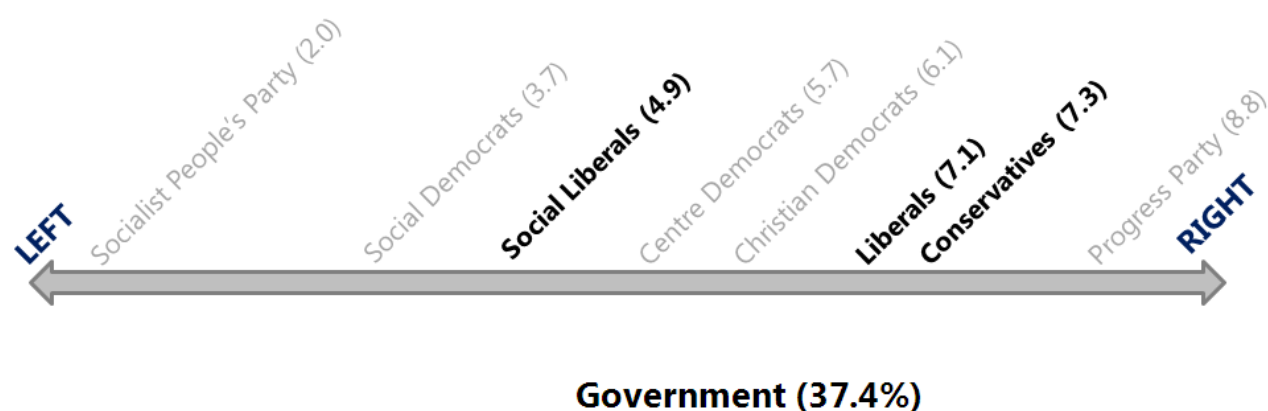


Figure 5.2 Danish *Folketing*, 1988

The new minority coalition between the center-left Social Liberals and the right-wing Liberals and Conservatives is central to explaining the end of the footnote policy era and the subsequent decision to send the naval corvette to the Gulf: the then Prime Minister Poul Schluter (1999) has later explained that “the only possibility for the Conservatives and the Liberals to *break up the parliamentary opposition* and to put an end to the footnote policy was to create a three-party government with the Social Liberals” (quoted in Doeser 2011: 230, emphasis added, see also Doeser 2013).

<sup>77</sup> The left-right party position values are from 1988 and come from the Ray-Marks-Steenbergen (Ray 1999; Steenbergen and Marks 2007) dataset. The original values vary from 0 to 1, where 0.5 denotes the center. To maintain consistency with the previous chapters and the data used in Chapter 4, I multiplied the values by 10. The values now range between 0 and 10, 10 being far-right and 0 being far-left.



The statement of the Conservative leader lends very strong support for the policy viability hypothesis in explaining the government's 1990 commitment in the Gulf: in order to weaken the capacity of the majority opposition that continuously opposed the government's foreign policy agenda throughout the 1980s, the ruling parties knew that they had to reach across the opposite side of the political spectrum and cooperate with at least one of the opposition parties. Comparative Politics scholars also point out the ideological composition of this government and argued that the Conservatives and the Liberals "succeeded in destroying the alternative majority, *especially in foreign policy issues*" (Elklit 1999: 80, emphasis added).

The Conservatives and the Liberals acted strategically as they formed the coalition with the leftist party that was still the closest to their respective ideological positions along the left-right political spectrum, as Figure 5.2 shows. The Social Liberals were also sympathetic to join the coalition as their policy position on the footnotes evolved towards that of the Conservatives and the Liberals over time. Social Liberal Party's spokesperson said by 1988 that "the previous years' politicization of foreign policy had not been beneficial...the improved superpower relations had created new opportunities for Denmark to act in the global arena" (Doeser 2011: 231), implying the Social Liberal convergence toward the Conservative-Liberal line.

Even though the coalition parties maintained agreement on the importance of Danish activism at the international level, it was still not an easy decision for the Social Liberals to accept the Conservative-Liberal proposal to join Gulf War in 1990. While the right-wing members of the government argued for "the need to support the UN *and* the need to support the US in its conflict with Iraq" (Olesen 2012: 27, emphasis in original), the Social Liberals approached with skepticism and emphasized that "it was only due to the UN involvement that the party could support it" (Olesen 2012: 28). When the blockade received UN sanction by

August 1990, the Social Liberals joined their coalition partners in putting the proposal up for parliamentary vote, even though the Party's leader told that it was not an easy decision to make (Doeser 2013: 591). In sum, even though the Social Liberals were still somewhat lukewarm towards the idea of Danish participation in an overseas military operation even with the UN mandate, they chose to support the proposal and send the corvette to the Gulf because they were in government. In this sense, it is plausible to argue that the Social Liberal consent to Denmark's presence in the Gulf was enabled by *logrolling*, where the greatest incentive for the party was to prevent a government crisis and continue their term in government.

In the opposition ranks, the Social Democrats fiercely opposed participating in the blockade until the operation received the UN's mandate (Olesen 2012). Once the UN sanctioned the naval blockade, however, the Social Democrats cooperated with the Social Liberals in the government and "emphasized the UN aspects of the operation" to garner votes from the other opposition parties (Doeser 2013: 591).

Most importantly, the participation of the Social Liberals in the government helped the Social Democrats find an ideologically familiar voice in the government with whom they could work together in the run up to the parliamentary vote. While it is important to note that the decision to send the *Fischer* to the Gulf was facilitated by the UN mandate, the ideological composition of the minority government with parties from both the right and the left gave it policy viability and allowed for a smoother dialogue between the government and the opposition. This is critical especially given the recent, tense history between the two sides of the political spectrum throughout the footnote policy era.

*Public Opinion:* Did the public opinion have any influence on the government's decision to participate in the Gulf War? It was known prior to the Gulf War that the public opinion was

increasingly supportive of Denmark's membership in NATO, which initiated the Gulf blockade despite the lack of a UN resolution at first (Doeser 2013: 589). Those who disagreed with the statement 'We should leave NATO as soon as possible' had increased from 54 percent in 1987 to 70 percent in 1988, signaling a clear and sharp upward trend in pro-NATO attitudes (Doeser 2011: 235, Table 1). More importantly, 50 percent of the voters who were affiliated with the left-wing, historically NATO-skeptic parties disagreed with the statement (Doeser 2011: 235), indicating that the Danish public support for the footnote policy and for the tense relations with NATO had declined. The increase in public support regarding continued Danish membership in NATO likely gave the Social Liberals the public vote of confidence to contribute to the naval blockade in the Gulf.

The elections of December 1990 and the resulting defeat of the Social Liberals, however, might be indicative of the declining public support for Danish participation in the Gulf, at least as far as the left-wing voters are concerned. Following the elections, the Social Liberals—who voted for the participation in the Gulf as recent as three months ago—left the government and joined the parliamentary opposition, which wanted the incoming Conservative-Liberal government to withdraw the corvette if war broke out (Doeser 2013: 592). The leftist opposition, in other words, was reunited by the end of 1990 when the rightist government lost its only left-wing ally.

This realignment among the government and opposition seats thus constrained the former's position and resulted in the decision to keep the corvette out of the war zone. In other words, one can argue that the Danish public was initially supportive of the Gulf operation if their increased support for NATO membership can be framed as an indirect gesture of support for NATO's initiation of the blockade in the Gulf. However, the evidence more strongly suggests

that public opinion on participation in the Gulf was instead filtered through the parties, most notably through the Social Liberal Party. Whereas the public support for NATO and the Social Liberal's shift away from the 'footnote policy' go hand in hand in explaining the Social Liberal support for the September 1990 participation in the Gulf, the decline of the Social Liberal vote in December 1990 and the increased likelihood of war discouraged the Social Liberal Party and led them to withdraw their support away from its old coalition partners regarding the continuation of Danish presence in Iraq. In either case, it can be argued that public opinion did not outweigh the role of government composition in the intensity of Danish commitments in the Gulf. In fact, the government's room for maneuver regarding their foreign policy behavior in the Gulf was really contingent upon the presence of the Social Liberals in the otherwise purely right-wing Conservative-Liberal government, as the above analysis demonstrates.

*Threat to National Survival:* Did Denmark approach the Gulf operation to respond to a threat to survival, outweighing the effects of government composition? The short answer is 'no.' Indeed, Olesen (2012: 14) contends that "compared to the earlier threat against Denmark stemming from the Soviet Union...the 1990s were a period of remarkable lack of security threats against Denmark." As such, the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq was certainly not an existential threat to Denmark that could have motivated the country's response and sidelined the effects of the decision-making dynamics imposed by the composition of the government.

Nevertheless, the smaller extremist parties in the *Folketing* did bring up the theme of threat and approached the Gulf operation as a fight against terrorism to protect the Atlantic Alliance. A former leader of the extreme-right Progress Party at the time stated that "there is no doubt that terrorism is and remains enemy number 1 [sic] for the Progress Party and ... we will do anything to prevent such terrorism from approaching NATO's southern flank" (quoted in

Olesen 2012: 29). This was not picked up by the government, however, in making the decision to commit the corvette to the Gulf operation.

*Political Leadership:* As argued earlier in Chapter 2, leaders are critical in the study of foreign policy as their personal motivations, professional experience, or psychological characteristics might drive them to sideline institutional constraints to achieve particular foreign policy goals. In this sense, it is important to focus on the most significant political figure in this period, Danish Foreign Minister Uffe Ellemann-Jensen of the Liberal Party, to understand whether the commitment decision in 1990 was a result of individual-level factors.

Studies in Danish foreign policy characterize Uffe Ellemann-Jensen as the foremost supporter of Denmark's foreign policy activism during the early post-Cold War years. Several accounts suggest that Ellemann-Jensen made it his personal objective to not only end the footnote policy period and demonstrate Danish commitment in the Gulf, but he also wanted to transform Denmark's foreign policy identity away from its social democratic, cosmopolitan roots into an active international actor that can easily be placed on the map in the post-Cold War international security environment (Branner 2013, Doeser 2013, Pedersen 2012).

With the Prime Minister Schluter choosing to focus on domestic politics, Ellemann-Jensen was effectively the foreign policy tsar during the 1980s and the early 1990s (Doeser 2013: 588-589). To what extent Ellemann-Jensen was a game changer in the run up to the decision to participate in the Gulf War, however, is open to debate. On the one hand, Ellemann-Jensen was courageous enough to announce without receiving any formal support from his government that Denmark would send a naval corvette to the Gulf. He therefore publicly committed his government, "which infuriated the Social Liberals as well as the Prime Minister"

(Doeser 2013: 590). In this sense, Ellemann-Jensen certainly seized the opportunity to define the commitment behavior of the government.

On the other hand, the accounts suggest that even though he wanted his government to make more intense commitments beyond the contribution of the naval corvette and enter into a stronger alliance with the US and NATO, he had to back down as the Social Liberals in the government and the Social Democrats in the opposition put significant constraints on his room for maneuver (Doeser 2013, Olesen 2012). As a result, he had to first wait for the UN to issue the mandate, and then seek support in the government and among the opposition parties for the proposal to join the blockade. In sum, despite Ellemann-Jensen's strong personality and interest in changing Denmark's international profile into an active citizen of the international community, his efforts in pushing Denmark to participate in the Gulf War were only as decisive as allowed by the Social Liberals and Social Democrats in the policy-making process.

To conclude, the case of the Gulf War and the preceding episode in Danish foreign affairs known as the 'footnote policy era' demonstrate that the composition of the government was key in explaining Denmark's commitment behavior in the Gulf, at a critical moment of international systemic change. While the assertive political leadership of Ellemann-Jensen was certainly visible in this period and specifically in the decision to join the Gulf War, Denmark's commitment in the naval blockade was made possible primarily by the participation of the Social Liberals in the right-oriented Conservative-Liberal coalition.

This new coalition achieved ideological heterogeneity and consequently, dismantled the 'alternative majority' in the parliament which had continuously blocked its foreign policy agenda. By dividing the leftist parliamentary opposition, the government effectively ended the footnote policy period, and ultimately sent Danish capabilities beyond its borders "for the first

time in modern history” (Branner 2013: 146). The presence of the Social Liberals—a long-time member of the left-wing ‘alternative majority’—in the government facilitated the cooperation of the coalition with the opposition parties such as the Social Democrats. In the context of indirect public opinion and non-existent threat to national survival, the ideological composition of the government was central to explaining the Danish decision to send material resources to the Gulf in 1990. On the other hand, the international context, specifically the UN mandate for the blockade, further facilitated the decision.

Ultimately, the dissolution of the ‘footnote policy era’ during which the ideologically cohesive left-wing parliamentary opposition had challenged the foreign policy commitments of the right-wing government, followed by the formation of a new, hybrid left-right minority coalition that decided on the Danish participation in the 1990 Gulf War together illuminate the findings in Chapter 4. Particularly, the analysis lends strong support to the ‘policy viability’ explanation regarding the variation in the commitment intensity of minority coalitions with respect to their ideological composition.

In Chapter 4, the findings demonstrated that all else being equal, the commitment intensity of minority coalitions was contingent upon the ideological fragmentation of the opposition, which the coalition would maintain by including parties from the opposite sides of the political spectrum. The *policy incongruence* of the minority coalition measured as crossing the center of the political spectrum, in other words, helps the coalition leave the parliamentary opposition ideologically fragmented, therefore facilitating the increase in the intensity of foreign policy commitments.

The case that is evaluated in this section has shown that the change in the *policy incongruence* of the minority coalition was central to explaining the shift in the commitment

intensity of Denmark as a participant in the Gulf War. While ‘reaching across the aisle’ was the key factor in this shift, *logrolling* seems to be an explanation for why the early sporadic disagreements among the governing parties on the Gulf operation were swept under the rug along the way.

The ‘policy viability’ approach also maintained its explanatory power vis-à-vis the alternative explanations such as public opinion, threat to national survival and political leadership. At the domestic level, the necessity to seek parliamentary consensus prior to international missions encouraged the left-right hybrid coalition to look for more allies from the opposition seats. Finally, the foreign policy vision of Denmark in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War to become an aspiring ‘activist’ at the international level and its perceptions toward the UN’s capacity to legitimize international interventions further facilitated the deployment of the corvette to the Gulf in 1990.

The next case analysis turns to a more recent incident of international commitment, where Denmark joined the Iraq war coalition in 2003.

### **Offensive Danish Foreign Policy and the 2003 Iraq War**

As argued earlier in this chapter, Danish foreign policy in the post-Cold War era towards international activism was marked by two major turning points. One of these was the decision to join the naval blockade in the Gulf in 1990, discussed above. The second major shift in Danish foreign policy came with the country’s 2003 decision to join the US-led war in Iraq, with which Denmark’s foreign policy activism took a “super-Atlanticist” turn (Mouritzen 2007). On March 18, 2003, the government represented by the Minister for Foreign Affairs Per Stig Moller (2003) proposed the *Folketing* the commitment of “a submarine, a corvette, a team of doctors as well as



a small contribution of staff and liaison personnel.” This proposal was accepted on March 21<sup>st</sup> by the government parties, namely the Liberals and the Conservatives as well as the extra-governmental right-wing Danish People’s Party, while the leftist opposition parties collectively voted against it. Ultimately, the war bill passed with “a slim majority of 11 votes” (Mello 2012: 440, also see Kaarbo and Cantir 2013).

*Ideological Composition:* The government that asked the *Folketing* its support for Danish participation in the 2003 Iraq war came to power in November 2001 by defeating the Social Democratic minority government led by Poul Nyrup Rasmussen. The incoming minority government was led by the Liberal party leader, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, and included the Conservative Party as its partner. Ideologically, this partnership resulted in a pure right-wing government unlike the 1990 cabinet that sent the corvette ship to the Gulf.

Even though the new minority government did not have the ideological composition to divide the opposition as it happened after the 1988 elections, it was still successful at garnering enough votes in the parliament without the need to cooperate with the left-leaning parties in the parliament. The reason for this was the historical victory that the Danish right received in the 2001 elections: the Liberals won 56 seats in the 179-seat parliament, the Conservatives won 16, and the Danish People’s Party won 22 seats. With the outside support from the DPP, the Liberal-Conservative minority coalition could enjoy a pure-right majority in the parliament. Indeed, Pedersen (2012: 339) explains that “for the first time in 70 years, it was possible to find a majority for foreign policy that did not have to include the Social Liberals and the Social Democrats.”

The Rasmussen government “made activism the emblem of its foreign policy and equated activism with a close alliance with the United States” (Rasmussen 2005: 81). The Liberals were

particularly vociferous to support the United States in the war against terrorism first and foremost through its leader, Fogh Rasmussen, while the Conservatives approached with more caution at the earlier stages. Specifically, Foreign Minister Per Stig Moller of the Conservative Party “argued in accordance with the traditional Danish foreign policy priorities when he stressed institutional rather than military activism” (Branner 2013: 160). Nevertheless, the Conservatives voted with the Liberals in support of the war bill in March 2003.

The Danish People’s Party was also supportive of the proposal to contribute to the war in Iraq. The DPP leader argued that “I and the Danish People’s Party feel clearly that it is much better to put our weight behind the US in connection with this mission, than France or Germany” (quoted in Olesen 2012: 56).

The DPP leader’s statement was in response to the Social Liberal and Social Democratic position: both parties first emphasized the need for a UN mandate for intervention (Pedersen 2012) and also argued for a multilateral response as opposed to aligning only with the United States: “When the Prime Minister...chooses to join Washington’s dictates...rather than the possibility of a dialogue through a joint response from Brussels, the term ‘activism’ becomes a false mark,” said the Social Democratic leader, Mogens Lykketoft, criticizing the government’s pro-US position (quoted in Branner 2013: 158).

In sum, the *ad hoc* majority that the Liberal-Conservative government maintained in the parliament with the Danish People’s Party diminished the possibility of another left-oriented ‘alternative majority’ that emerged during the ‘footnote’ era. As the three parties that achieved parliamentary majority maintained an agreement over Denmark’s participation in the war, the government did not face any difficulty in passing the war bill in March 2003. In this sense, the government achieved the “majority status in disguise” (Strom 1990).

*Logrolling:* The government's ability to pass the war bill in 2003 came at a price, however. Since the government needed the parliamentary support of the Democratic People's Party for foreign as well as domestic policy, the latter used this vulnerability to its advantage by asking for side-payments such as getting policy concessions on immigration and refuge laws, which are the central pillars of the DPP platform (Economist Intelligence Unit 2002a: 14). As an example, the government agreed to cooperate and passed more stringent legislation on immigration and refuge as well as decreasing public expenditure and taxes (Economist Intelligence Unit 2003a: 12) in exchange for the DPP's support for the budgets in 2002 and 2003 (Economist Intelligence Unit 2002b, 2003a).

The close relationship that emerged between the government and the Democratic People's Party eventually found an ideational basis that facilitated further cooperation. The 'values policy' that the government emphasized with regards to education and environment, for instance, soon spilled over to immigration precisely because of the DPP's influence over domestic policy (Branner 2013: 149). A member of the DPP once said that "the change in 2001 [was] not just a change in government, but a change of systems" (Branner 2013: 161), indicating the Party's confidence in closely identifying itself with the government and its policies even though it formally remained outside of the cabinet. The leftist opposition parties and international observers grew increasingly cautious of this relationship as it began to sharply polarize Danish foreign and domestic policy (Economist Intelligence Unit 2002c).

The government's cooperation with the DPP over a series of policy reforms ultimately enabled the former to pass the war bill in the parliament in March 2003 with the latter's votes. Over time, the cooperation between the coalition and the opposition party over the Iraq policy became much more apparent. Kaarbo and Cantir (2013: 471) explain that "the Danish People's

Party did indeed trade its votes for later deployment of peacekeepers in Iraq for concessions on asylum policies” in May 2003, once the initial armed confrontation was over.

*Public Opinion:* Was the Danish electorate influential in the government’s decision to join the war in Iraq alongside the United States? Jakobsen (2012: 4) argues that traditionally, “the public at large favors Danish military participation in international operations.” As for the Iraq case, polls and observations by the analysts show that while a notable proportion of the public did not favor the government’s proposal, this opposition was still not overwhelming. A Gallup poll conducted three months prior to the March 2003 decision shows that those who did not approve Denmark’s participation in the war at all were a little more than 40 percent whereas those who supported it either ‘in the form of a UN operation’ or as ‘carried out by the US and its allies’ made up about 45 percent of the respondents, while some 10 percent had no answer (Danish Foreign Policy Yearbook 2004). Another EOS-Gallup poll in January 2003 asked about “Danish participation in a military intervention without UN mandate,” where 83 per cent of the respondents said such an intervention would be “unjustified” and “58 per cent even as ‘absolutely unjustified’” (Hummel 2007: 12).

Despite the dramatic variation in opinion polls, however, the combined public opinion ratings for the government and the DPP stayed within the initial 50 percent range throughout 2001 and 2003, indicating that the public opinion for the government was not affected by the parliamentary debate over Iraq. In fact, the opinion ratings were as high as 51.5 percent one month after the war decision, which was only 0.8 points lower than the election results of November 2001. In other words, even though the parliament was deeply divided over the Iraq proposal and the polls showed public objection to it, there was no decisive public opposition against Denmark’s contribution to the war that would politically harm the governing parties. It is

likely that the consistent domestic support that the government parties and their parliamentary ally, the Danish People's Party, received until and during 2003 helped them vote for the bill with confidence.

*Threat to National Survival:* Unlike the war in 1990, the war in Iraq was viewed by the credible parties of the Danish right as an opportunity to respond to the new and more immediate security challenges that emerged in the post-Cold War era such as international terrorism or weapons of mass destruction. The Liberals and the Conservatives perceived the new security threats as directly challenging Danish national security. In an opinion piece published in 2003, Frank Laybourn, the foreign and security policy adviser to the Liberal Party, expressed that “international terrorism is a threat to our peace and security, and can strike any country and any population group—including Denmark and the Danes” (2003, emphasis added). Quoting an earlier statement of George W. Bush, “we cannot let our enemies strike first,” Laybourn (2003) stated, and that Fogh Rasmussen “share[d] the US assessment of the new threats,” implying the government's preference for a decisive and immediate response.

Similarly for the Rasmussen government's ally in the parliament since November 2001, the Danish People's Party “the threat was real both as an international threat and as a domestic one” (Olesen 2012: 45), suggesting that the Party viewed the participation in the war in Iraq as an opportunity to promote Danish national security. The statements of the DPP leader Pia Kjaersgaard in 2001 that compare the threat of religious terrorism to the threats posed by the Nazi Germany (Olesen 2012: 46) also stand as powerful signals toward predicting the Party's position regarding the Rasmussen government's March 2003 proposal to join the war coalition. In sum, the major Danish political parties of the right shared a common perception of threat to

national security, which was another reason why they were able to cooperate and eventually pass the parliamentary resolution to contribute to the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

Parties on the left, especially the Social Democrats, were less certain about the notion of threat or how to respond to it. The leader of the Social Democratic government at the time, Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, stressed in the immediate aftermath of the 2001 attacks that while Denmark was not under threat, though it was still important to see that “it is a different world we now live in” (Olesen 2012: 42). While acknowledging the changes in international security, however, “the Social Liberals and the Social Democrats refused to accept the threat perception expressed by the Liberals and the Conservatives” (Olesen 2012: 57). Other accounts challenge this view, however, by explaining how the Social Democratic leader, Nyrup Rasmussen, used to be more of a hardliner during the November 2001 elections when he said that “we do not want to give up our way of life, our democracy, our values, our safety ... our future is common—our security is also that of NATO and the US” (Larsen 2005: 85). The Social Democrats were clearly confused about how to position themselves vis-à-vis the September 11 attacks and their aftermath. It is likely that their inability to establish a position early on helped the Liberals, Conservatives and the Danish People’s Party further strengthen their policy position in the political marketplace.

*Political Leadership:* Did leadership play any role in Denmark’s decision to join the war? It is argued that the dynamic between the Liberals and Conservatives in the coalition had already put the prime minister in a stronger leadership position. Some accounts portray the relationship between the two governing parties as having “a big brother-little brother character” and argue that while Rasmussen ‘delivered,’ the Conservative leader, Bendt Bendtsen, fell short of meeting his election promises (Economist Intelligence Unit 2003a: 14-15), thus putting Rasmussen’s political leadership skills ahead of his coalition partner.

Furthermore, analysts agree that the leadership of Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen was central in Denmark's decision to join the US in the war in Iraq (Branner 2013, Elkjaer 2004, Larsen 2009, Mouritzen 2007). Bo Elkjaer, an award-winning Danish journalist who later revealed that the government introduced the war proposal based on evidence that was less than fully supportive of the claim that Iraq had an active weapons program and was involved in terrorist activity with Al Qaeda, reported (2004: 10) that Fogh Rasmussen was personally convinced as early as September 2002: "I am not in the slightest doubt that he possesses weapons of mass destruction and wishes to manufacture them," Rasmussen said.

Mouritzen (2007: 160) also argues that the Prime Minister "himself took the decision, after a phone call from President Bush," indicating that the decision to join the war was his idea since the beginning. Indeed, Henriksen and Ringsmose (2012) provide a detailed account of the close personal relationship that Rasmussen and President Bush developed in the post-September 11 period and especially during the eve of the war to suggest that Rasmussen was personally invested in the decision beyond the politics of national security.

Against this background, speculations abound as to whether Rasmussen's appointment as the NATO Secretary-General in 2009 should be seen as a token of good will in response to his efforts in the early 2000s (Branner 2013). Some argue that it is impossible to tell this for sure (Henriksen and Ringsmose 2012). Nevertheless, there is significant evidence that Rasmussen's convictions, personal interest and position on the issue contributed to the decision to join the war in 2003.

In conclusion, the case analysis of Denmark in the 2003 decision to join the Iraq War shows that the result—Danish participation in the war—fails to support the 'policy viability' hypothesis and the findings presented in Chapter 4 on minority coalitions. The expectation was

that Denmark would not join the war since the minority coalition did not ‘reach across the aisle’ but included only right-wing parties, thereby allowing for an ideologically unified parliamentary opposition to challenge its foreign policy agenda and impede its ability to make international commitments. Despite the presence of this pure right-wing government, Denmark was still able to commit resources in the US-led war in Iraq in 2003.

The analysis shows, however, that the Danish participation in the 2003 war was an over-determined case where the several possible factors that would explain the decision actually contributed to the outcome. The single most important reason for this outcome was that the government had the opportunity to align with the right-wing Danish People’s Party in the parliament and reach the necessary parliamentary majority to pass the war bill in March 2003. The Danish People’s Party used their size advantage in the parliament by getting side-payments from the government in the form of domestic policy reforms in immigration and refugee in return for their support for the coalition’s foreign policy agenda towards Iraq.

Moreover, the DPP and the government shared common perceptions of threat to national security caused by international terrorism (the most notable suspect being Iraq), which further enabled their cooperation during the parliamentary vote alongside their logrolling relationship towards immigration and refugee policies, described above. Finally, the lack of an overwhelming public opposition against the war and the personal interest of the Prime Minister further contributed to Denmark’s decision to join the war coalition in 2003.



## Conclusion

This chapter took a qualitative approach to provide an in-depth demonstration of how policy incongruence mediates the commitment intensity of minority coalitions through fragmenting the parliamentary opposition and offering the government ‘policy viability.’

To undertake this investigation, the chapter has first utilized an out-of-sample case from Denmark and evaluated the effects of ideological composition, logrolling, public opinion, threat to national survival and political leadership on the Danish decision to contribute a naval corvette ship in the Gulf operation in 1990. This case study concluded that the major factor behind the Danish commitment in the Gulf was the ideological composition of the government that included parties from the left and the right of the political spectrum. The ideological heterogeneity of the government gave it policy viability, which was the key explanatory factor behind the end of the ‘footnote policy era’ that stymied the foreign policy agenda of the right-wing governments throughout the 1980s. Even though the incoming government in 1988 had minority status in the parliament, its ideological composition made it possible to not only break the left-wing ‘alternative opposition’ in the parliament but to engage in a dialogue with the opposition parties that facilitated the decision to commit resources in the naval blockade in 1990. This decision took place in the absence of threats to Danish national security and furthermore, the assertive political leadership of the Foreign Minister Uffe Ellemann-Jensen was influential only to the extent allowed by the coalition parties.

The second case from Denmark has failed to support the ‘policy viability’ explanation. Even though the government elected in November 2001 was a pure-right-wing minority coalition, which, by implication, resulted in a parliamentary opposition that included several

prominent left-wing parties, this government was still able to commit Denmark to the war in Iraq not only by signing the ‘letter of eight’ but by deploying material resources to the region.

The case analysis revealed that a multitude of factors contributed to this outcome, making the decision an over-determined case for the purposes of this study: for the first time in decades, the right-wing parties secured a majority in the elections, which gave the minority coalition the opportunity to enter into a logrolling relationship with the right-wing Danish People’s Party in the parliament. As a result of logrolling on immigration and refugee laws, the DPP supported the government’s proposal to contribute to the war in Iraq. In addition, the Iraqi regime was interpreted as a threat to Denmark’s national security by several parties on the right and the left of the political spectrum; the public opinion for the parties stayed consistently high despite the early public opposition for the war itself; and the Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen showed notable assertiveness in aligning Danish interests with those of the United States.

The results of this case have also shed light on the anomalous outcomes that were left unexplained by the findings of Chapter 4. The results illuminate those instances where minority coalitions *can* make more intense international commitments than it is expected by the majority of the literature on Comparative Politics and the ‘policy viability’ theory. Even though minority coalitions suffer from a constant ‘size disadvantage’ in the parliament, the Danish decision in 2003 illustrates that these coalitions also actively seek and adopt new strategies to circumvent their disadvantaged position and tip the scale in their favor. One such strategy that the Danish case reveals is policy-based cooperation with parties outside the government. Logrolling with other parties in the parliament without entering into a formal coalition agreement not only allows minority coalitions to garner *ad hoc* support for policy, but also makes sure that the government is not obliged to make compromises in office payoffs. This is an important insight to explain the

anomalous instances where minority coalitions—even when they do not fragment the opposition ideologically—can still engage in international commitments.

Furthermore, the conclusions drawn from these cases also illuminate the country-level results that were presented in the concluding sections of Chapter 4 and help us interpret why Denmark stands out as the outlier country with the highest ‘baseline’ commitment value in the concluding analyses of Chapter 4.

Indeed, as discussed previously in Chapter 4, the random-effects estimates of the regression analyses show that when compared to the other European parliamentary regimes in the dataset, Denmark—a country ruled exclusively by minority coalitions—displays one of the highest baseline commitment intensity levels in the 1994-2004 period. This result is contextualized extensively in the case analyses presented in this section. First, the historical trajectory of Danish foreign policy towards ‘international activism’ in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, and the shift towards ‘offensive Danish foreign policy’ marked by the 2003 Iraq decision show that the country had already adopted a foreign policy ‘vision’ towards increased international presence since the end of the Cold War. This vision has likely contributed to the Danish governments’ ability to make more intense international commitments regardless of the inter-party dynamics surrounding coalition governance. Second, the analysis of the 2003 Iraq decision reveals that the factors that were not accounted for in the regression analyses in Chapter 4—logrolling, public opinion, threats to national security, political leadership—all contributed to the commitment decision in 2003. In this sense, the outlier position of Denmark as shown in Figure 4.4 of Chapter 4 is further contextualized by these alternative explanations that remained latent in the statistical analyses.

Overall, the case analyses presented in this chapter provide a far more comprehensive evaluation of the variation in the intensity of international commitments, specifically for the regimes that are predominantly governed by minority coalitions. The next chapter now turns to minimum winning coalitions to investigate how they make foreign policy commitments under similarly increasing levels of policy incongruence.

## CHAPTER 6

### WHEN DISAGREEMENTS LEAD TO COMMITMENTS: DUTCH FOREIGN POLICY BEHAVIOR IN THE 2003 IRAQ WAR

As iterated throughout the dissertation, the central point raised in this project is the influence of the mathematical and the ideological organization of parties in parliamentary governments on the commitment intensity of these regimes at the international level. To that end, Chapter 4 has offered a quantitative analysis of post-Cold War foreign policy behaviors of European parliamentary regimes and demonstrated that the interactive effects of the type of government and its policy incongruence indeed influenced their commitment behavior.

Chapter 5 has pushed this inquiry further by qualitatively demonstrating how government composition affects commitment behavior in the context of minority coalitions. With a structured-focused comparative case analysis of Danish commitments in the Gulf in 1990 and 2003, the chapter has uncovered the mechanism underlying the ‘policy viability’ explanation, as well as the alternative factors at the domestic-, individual-, and international-levels which further influence international commitments when minority coalitions do not enjoy ‘policy viability’ in the parliament.

One other central argument raised in the dissertation has concerned the effects of policy incongruence in minimum winning coalitions on their commitment behavior. The theoretical expectations presented in Chapter 2 have alluded to the moderating effect of policy incongruence on minimum winning coalitions. Since this type of government is mathematically fragile as it is—where the withdrawal of any party causes the loss of parliamentary majority, the refined veto players approach in Chapter 2 has hypothesized that minimum winning coalitions should be far

more constrained in increasing the intensity of international commitments, especially when policy disagreements grow among the governing parties. In other words, Chapter 2 has argued that the fragility of minimum winning coalitions should be amplified at higher levels of policy incongruence, leading to a moderation in the intensity of their commitments.

The results of the quantitative analysis in Chapter 4 have suggested otherwise, however. The findings have concluded instead that minimum winning coalitions engage in *more intense* commitments as their policy incongruence increases—a finding that does not support the refined veto players hypothesis. What could be the mechanism that justifies this relationship?

The question that this chapter asks therefore concerns the commitments of minimum winning coalitions: *how does a minimum winning coalition increase its commitment intensity under increasing levels of policy incongruence? What are the circumstances under which a minimum winning coalition engages in more intense international commitments?*

To answer this question, this chapter uses the Dutch decision to provide political support for the 2003 US-led war in Iraq and its aftermath. As a country that has been historically ruled by minimum winning coalitions, the Netherlands provides a great institutional setting to undertake this inquiry. Furthermore, the 2003 Dutch case points to the fluidity of governments and its influence in foreign policy. The fact that the 2003 decision to support the Iraq war had actually spilled over to two minimum winning coalitions as well as a third coalition *in-the-making* provides an interesting political setting that demonstrates how foreign policy cannot be isolated from the dynamics of domestic politics. With an in-depth analysis of this case by the method of structured-focused comparison, the chapter seeks to discover the mechanisms that link increased policy incongruence in minimum winning coalitions to increased commitment intensity as well as the other factors which could further influence this relationship.

The chapter proceeds as follows. Following the format of Chapter 5 on Denmark, the next two sections present a detailed background of the Dutch political system to highlight the policy-making norms and processes, and how they influence coalition foreign policy in this country. The chapter then offers a discussion of Dutch foreign policy in the post-Cold War era to set the historical context against which the 2003 case should be evaluated. The following section presents the analysis. The chapter concludes with a summary of the analysis and final thoughts.

### **From Consensus to Competition: The Dutch Political Landscape**

Like Denmark, politics in the Netherlands is also characterized by the interaction of multiple political parties in an electoral system based on proportional representation (PR). Andeweg and Irwin (2005: 46) report that “since 1967, in any given election, 20 or more parties have generally submitted lists at the elections and up to 14 parties were successful in getting candidates elected,” dramatically capturing the plethora of parties represented in the Dutch political system. Of these, however, only a handful “participates in governing coalitions or has ‘the power of intimidation’ or ‘blackmail potential’” (Andeweg and Irwin 2005: 46).

The Conservative-Liberals (VVD), the Christian Democrats (specifically the ARP, CHU and KVP, which by the 1970s joined together to become what is known as the Christian Democratic Appeal or the CDA) and the Labour Party (PvdA) have historically defined the Dutch political landscape as the most “relevant” parties in a consensus-based system (Andeweg and Irwin 2005: 53-67).

All of these parties participated in governments in some capacity as junior or senior coalition members in the post-Second World War era as multiparty politics in the Netherlands has invariably yielded coalition governments as its institutional outcome. The CDA, for instance,

served as a coalition partner in every government except two (out of 12) between 1977 and 2007, and was the party of the prime minister in all of them (Andeweg 2008: 259). The VVD had enjoyed the 'kingmaker' status frequently by cooperating with the Christian Democrats as well as the Labour Party, so much so that it was a junior coalition partner in 15 out of 27 governments between 1945 and 2007 (Andeweg 2008: 259), and it is currently the senior partner in a majority coalition with the Labour Party.

Finally, the Labour Party (PvdA) has been the first resort of the social-democratic electorate in the Netherlands since the end of the Second World War and has been consistently receiving votes within the 20-27 per cent range since 1994, excluding the dramatic drop in the 2002 elections after its eight-year incumbency (European Election Database, 2014). Like its Christian Democratic counterpart, the PvdA has also frequently participated in coalition governments since 1945, often as the senior partner (Andeweg 2008: 259).

The progressive-liberal Democrats '66, the GreenLeft and the populist right-wing party List Pim Fortuyn (LPF) join the aforementioned parties as the more recent additions to the group of relevant parties in the Netherlands.<sup>78</sup> The LPF formed a coalition government with the CDA and the VVD in July 2002 though it survived only until the October of that year, owing to a crisis within the LPF (Van Holsteyn and Irwin 2004). Indeed, it is the breakdown of the CDA-VVD-LPF coalition, the elections that followed in January 2003 and the coalition talks that took place

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<sup>78</sup> Of these, the LPF should receive particular attention as the party had shown unprecedented success in the first general elections in 2002, mere months after its establishment under its charismatic namesake, Pim Fortuyn (Mudde 2007: 210). Championing new issues such as the cultural integration of ethnic groups with the "Dutch way of living" (Pennings and Keman 2002: 2), the party managed to win 26 seats in the Dutch parliament, the *Tweede Kamer*, despite Fortuyn's assassination less than two weeks prior to the elections in May 2002 (Van Holsteyn and Irwin 2004).



until the formation of a new coalition government in May 2003 that provide the political background to the Dutch decision to participate in the US-led invasion of Iraq and its aftermath.

Consensus politics had been a foremost defining feature of Dutch politics until mid-1960s. To fully understand and justify why the Netherlands provides a great contemporary example of ‘politicized’ foreign policy despite its history of a consociational system, however, it is important to spend some time on its political transformation, especially during the 1970s.

Voorhoeve explains that the leading Dutch parties listed above, namely the CDA, VVD and the PvdA reflect the major “pillars” of the society: “Until the mid-sixties, the Netherlands was characterized by religious or ideological sub-societies: Protestant, Roman Catholic, Socialist, and Liberal. These sub-systems, called ‘*zuilen*’ or pillars, comprised not only the churches and political parties, but also the schools, trade-unions, voluntary associations, hospitals, broadcasting corporations, newspapers, etc.” (1979: 59). As such, they represent the major political cleavages in the Netherlands, namely “the Left-Right continuum and the Progressive-Conservative divide,” which “are known to be the most salient conflict dimensions in the Dutch context” (Pennings and Keman 2002: 6).

Andeweg and Irwin (2005: 123) explain that “collegial and collective government has long historical roots in the Netherlands,” attesting to the cooperation among the sub-systems, which was “constantly reinforced by the coalition character of Dutch politics.” The conventional wisdom that emphasizes the crisis-prone nature of multiparty governance in parliamentary regimes had thus been defied in the Dutch context, thanks to pillarization.

This tradition, known as “the politics of accommodation in a ‘consociational democracy’” (Voorhoeve 1979: 60), began to change by 1967 with the process of “depillarization,” namely “the erosion of the consociational system of separate social, religious,

and political blocs” (Kaarbo 2012: 73). The most significant political outcome of depillarization has been the change in the “apolitical, technocratic” nature of the Dutch cabinets (Andeweg and Irwin 2005: 125) towards more politicization. Some of the ways in which politicization occurred include the growing importance of coalition agreements among parties and the increasingly frequent interactions between the ministers and the party leaders (Andeweg and Irwin 2005: 127, see also Andeweg 2008: 269) to more closely monitor and maintain party-minister consistency in policy-making. The authors also report that “between 1967 and 2003 the proportion of ministers with prior parliamentary experience rose to 65 per cent” (2005: 126), suggesting that the technocratic nature of governing cabinets was being replaced with a preference for ministers with greater exposure to politics, which would undoubtedly result in more politicized and competitive coalition governments.

Depillarization has thus set the tone of coalition governments in this country since 1967 as inter-party politics moved away from consensus towards competition. Furthermore, as increased politicization has led to more polarization, political parties opted for forming minimalist governing coalitions. Looking at the period between 1967 and 2007, Andeweg (2008: 258) argues that “the decline of the surplus-majority coalition is indeed a real and significant change in line with the hypothesis that non-consociational coalitions are less inclusive than consociational coalitions.”

Andeweg’s (2008) observation attests to the more polarized nature of the political system. It has been shown, for instance, that “between 1946 and 1967 the country was governed 86 per cent of the time by larger-than-necessary [surplus majority] coalitions; between 1967 and 2003 this percentage declined to around 26 per cent” (Andeweg and Irwin 2005: 121). Pennings and Keman (2008: 159) also report that all Dutch governments have been minimum winning

coalitions since the 1970s except for one minority government in the early 1980s and the second ‘purple coalition,’ which was an oversized government, that ruled between 1998 until 2004.<sup>79</sup> The consistency of minimum winning coalitions throughout the past four decades of Dutch politics therefore provides an exceptional institutional setting to test the influence of the variation in policy incongruence on foreign policy behavior, specifically on the intensity of commitments.

Paralleling politicization and polarization among political parties, intra-party cohesion within parties had also begun to increase (Andeweg 2008: 272), minimizing the ideological factions inside party blocs that may spill over to policy-making.<sup>80</sup> Rochon (1999: 114) argues that “surveys of Second Chamber [*Tweede Kamer*] members show that they view themselves primarily as representatives of their party’s voters, and consequently feel bound to vote the party line under most circumstances,” exemplifying party discipline.

Furthermore, Andeweg (2008: 272) hints at the close relationship between the party in the parliament and in the government by arguing that “if a minister is forced to withdraw from the Cabinet, his party is likely to withdraw from the coalition.” This is a critical observation that demonstrates party discipline, especially given the constitutional rule in the Netherlands that once appointed to the cabinet; the ministers must vacate their parliamentary seat (Andeweg and Irwin 2005: 115). In other words, even though the party and the minister are legally disconnected from each other, both actors not only remain in close interaction through weekly meetings as mentioned earlier, but the party line is upheld by its members as well as the ministers, who are technically not affiliated with any political party. This dynamic contributes to the politicization

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<sup>79</sup> Pennings and Keman (2002: 1) explain that the nickname ‘purple’ comes from the colors of the parties, as “it combines the ‘red’ of the PvdA and the ‘blue’ of the VVD,” alongside their third partner, the D66.

<sup>80</sup> “Already in 1979, 68 per cent of all MPs interviewed in a survey agreed with the statement that ‘Government policy is formed in close consultation and cooperation with the parliamentary parties in the governmental majority’” (Andeweg and Irwin 2005: 140).

of foreign policy and maintains ideological cohesion among the members of the party as well as between the party and the minister.<sup>81</sup>

In sum, minimum winning coalitions remain “the game in town” in the Netherlands since the early 1970s with the onset of depillarization, leading to more competition between and more cohesion inside political parties. To the extent that minimum winning coalitions have been the default political outcome of parliamentary elections with highly cohesive political parties in this country, it provides additional confidence in my observations and conclusions pertaining to the dynamics of foreign policy decision-making and the behavioral outcomes, which will be discussed in the next sections. Clearly, the key domestic political institutions show strong consistency across the last four decades.

### **Coalition Politics and Foreign Policy in the Netherlands**

Certainly, Dutch depillarization was not only a matter of domestic politics. To the contrary, the politicization of politics in this country quickly spilled over to foreign policy. Whereas foreign policy had been assumed to be an elite affair for decades (Baehr 1980, see also Verbeek and Van der Vleuten 2008: 361) and was immune from public attention or domestic political infighting, the shift from consensus to competition at the domestic level also affected the ways in which the public and political parties began to develop opinions and compete over issues of foreign policy.

“Security and defense policy-making has become more politicized and domesticated,” Kaarbo (2012: 73) explains—a trend that continues to this day. Most recently, for instance, the

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<sup>81</sup> It is nevertheless important to acknowledge that intra-party disagreements on foreign policy, domestic and foreign alike, certainly take place in the Netherlands. Kaarbo (2012: 76, emphasis added) mentions that “the basic conflicts in Dutch politics are between and *within* parties,” though the mechanisms described above certainly help alleviate the conflicts within parties, especially in the foreign policy realm—a second-order issue area in terms of the electoral stakes of the MPs.

Christian Democrat-led coalition collapsed in February 2010 precisely because one of the junior partners, the Labour party, had a firm position against continuing the Dutch mission in Afghanistan (*Der Spiegel* 2010a). For the purposes of this dissertation then, the domesticization and politicization of foreign policy through depillarization provides a valuable opportunity to investigate whether and how domestic political competition among coalition parties is projected on the processes and behavioral outcomes of Dutch foreign policy.

Baehr (1980: 235) contends that the main actors of Dutch foreign policy can be rank ordered from most to least “influential” as “the Cabinet, the Second Chamber, high officials and diplomats and the political parties.” The fact that the bureaucrats—and indeed the main executives—of foreign policy come only after the cabinet and the parliament in their ability to influence the country’s international affairs is also indicative of the politicized nature of foreign policy in the Netherlands.

### **Dutch Foreign Policy in the post-Cold War Era**

The international standing of the Netherlands is characterized by the “the greatest of the smaller powers, or the smallest of the great powers” dichotomy (Herman 2006: 859), implying the visibility of the Netherlands on the world stage despite its size. As Kaarbo (2012) also maintains in her book, the foreign policy of the country stands on three grand notions, “peace, profits and principles” (Voorhoeve 1979). Specifically, these notions respectively pertain to the country’s ‘neutralist abstentionism’ in dealing with foreign affairs; its historical dependence on ‘maritime commercialism’ as an international economic actor; and its ‘internationalist idealism’ (Andeweg and Irwin 2005: 205-6) or “the long-standing Dutch commitment to international law” (Kaarbo 2012: 67). Indeed, Wijk (2007: 150) provides a brief list of organizations including the

International Court of Justice and the International Criminal court to argue that “this legal tradition explains why successive governments promote The Hague as the world capital of international law” (see also Andeweg and Irwin 2005: 215).

While the Dutch foreign policy has continued to champion international law and trade, the third historical cornerstone described above—neutralism—gave way to Atlanticism with the end of the Second World War when the Netherlands joined NATO in 1949: “joining the Atlantic Alliance has been interpreted as an unequivocal abandonment of the neutralist tradition” (Andeweg and Irwin 2005: 206). Thirty years after joining NATO, Baehr’s (1980: 242) study on the Dutch foreign policy elite concludes that “there exists a broad consensus with regard to the desirability of NATO membership.” In fact, within the NATO framework, the US was perceived as “absolutely reliable” for Dutch security interests (Baehr 1980: 242) and the country “prided itself always during the Cold War of being ‘a loyal ally’ of the United States” until 1991 (Everts 2010: 3).

The European Union, on the other hand, has been largely perceived as an economic partner by the Netherlands in this period (Baehr 1980: 241, 245; Everts 2010: 3). Andeweg and Irwin (2005: 207) contend that “the Dutch government long objected to plans for European rather than Atlantic defence [sic] arrangements, and served almost as an American proxy in the European Union.” The one brief period when the Netherlands adopted a pro-European outlook on security and defense matters took place during the two consecutive ‘purple’ coalitions led by the Labour Party (Verbeek and Van der Vleuten 2008: 374).<sup>82</sup> By 1999, this Labour-led coalition

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<sup>82</sup> Wijk (2007: 153-4) explains that the Netherlands showed remarkable support for the EU’s 1998 St. Malo process, as a result of which the European Rapid Reaction Force was established to promote a common European defense framework.

“even concluded that European defense should be emphasized” (Wijk 2007: 154), suggesting a notable break from the Atlanticist tradition.

One has to go back to the early 1990s, however, to understand the actual systemic change in Dutch foreign policy. With the end of the Cold War, the Netherlands felt the international systemic earthquake that had also struck Denmark, as Chapter 5 has explained. Verbeek and Van der Vleuten (2008: 358) emphasize that one of the key factors behind the structural change in Dutch foreign policy by the early 1990s was “the disappearance of communism as the long time enemy.” With the end of bipolarity, the country had to redefine its security and defense priorities just like Denmark, and focus on the new “international context where humanitarian interventions were becoming a major topic” (Verbeek and Van der Vleuten 2008: 363; see also Andeweg and Irwin 2005: 210). Indeed, the Netherlands had participated in a series of multilateral humanitarian missions in the Balkans and in Africa throughout the 1990s (Kaarbo 2012: 69). Some authors have argued that these missions were part of a broader Dutch “strategy to gain and exercise soft power” (Verbeek and Van der Vleuten 2008: 366) in the new international system.

In doing so, however, the accounts suggest that the Netherlands had to maintain a balancing act between the United States and the European Union (Van der Meulen and Soeters 2005: 548). For instance, the government “sided with the Americans by objecting to a last-minute mediation effort of the EU” in the run up to the 1991 Gulf War (Andeweg and Irwin 2005: 214), though when it was time to decide on how to participate in the war itself, it ultimately committed ships and navy units under the Western European Union’s umbrella as opposed to actively participating in the war alongside the US (Verbeek and Van der Vleuten 2008).

More recently, the balance seems to have favored Atlanticism even more. The Netherlands participated in the NATO bombing in Kosovo with F-16s in 1999 (Andeweg and Irwin 2005: 209); in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan in 2001; and of course decided to politically support the 2003 U.S.-led war in Iraq, all of which attest to the pro-Atlanticist tone in Dutch security and defense commitments in recent years (Everts 2010). Politically, successive governments in the early 2000s pronounced support for NATO at their formative stages “as the cornerstone of foreign policy” (Wijk 2007: 156), thus reinforcing the Atlanticist undertones of Dutch foreign policy. The next section analyzes the 2003 Iraq decision and its aftermath against this backdrop.

### **Commitment, *but How?* The Dutch Decision on the 2003 Iraq War**

The decision to provide ‘political, but not military’ support to the US-led war in Iraq and the subsequent commitment of the Dutch government to deploy 1,100 troops to the Iraqi province of *Al Muthanna* is a unique case for the purposes of this study as it spills over to three (or rather, two-and-a-half) governments between the period July 2002 to June 2003, allowing for a comparative study of government composition and foreign policy behavior. To set the stage for the analysis, Table 6.1 below summarizes the structures of governments and their commitment behavior across time.



<i>TIMEFRAME</i> <i>for 2003 IRAQ WAR</i>	<b>July 2002 – January 2003</b>	<b>January 2003 – April 2003</b>	<b>April 2003 – May 2003</b>
<b>Coalition parties</b>	CDA-VVD-LPF	CDA – PvdA ( <i>in-the-making</i> )	CDA-VVD-D66
<b>Coalition type</b>	Minimum winning	Minimum winning	Minimum winning
<b>Policy incongruence</b> ( <i>St. dev. measure</i> )	1.15	1.48	1.40
<b>Standing</b>	Elected government	Government negotiations; CDA-VVD-LPF is caretaker since October 2002	Government negotiations; formed May 27, 2003
<b>Commitment intensity</b>	Political support (First contemplated November 2002)	Political support (Declared March 2003, material assistance also provided later)	Political support (Stabilization force deployed in June 2003)

Table 6.1 Governments and commitment intensity in the Netherlands, July 2002 – May 2003

The process leading up to the commitment decision to provide political, but not military support for the war in Iraq began as early as August 2002, weeks after the CDA-VVD-LPF minimum winning coalition was formed under the premiership of Jan Peter Balkenende of the Christian Democrats (Everts 2010). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), also held by the CDA, agreed at first that “war was unavoidable and that, if and when it came, the Netherlands should side with the American politically as well as militarily” (Everts 2010: 7).<sup>83</sup>

The official request from the United States to the Netherlands to join the war coalition came in November 2002 (Davids Commission 2010: 524)—a month after the tripartite coalition fell apart and began its term as caretaker due to the infighting between the LPF ministers. Despite the original willingness displayed by the MFA to side with the Americans militarily, the

<sup>83</sup> An *Economist Intelligence Unit* report from March 2003 argues, however, that Balkenende never wanted to sign the letter of eight in an effort to become a bridge between the pro-war ‘gang of eight’ and the anti-war block in the EU, namely France, Germany and Belgium (2003b: 15).

Dauids Commission report<sup>84</sup> concludes that “from the outset, the government stated there could be no offensive contribution to the US plans by the Netherlands” unless independent investigations could prove that Iraq was not fulfilling its obligations mandated by the UN (2010: 524).<sup>85</sup> By December 2002, Balkenende “announced that the Netherlands would ‘support the US’ if it came to a war” though he “did not in this context mention military support specifically” (Everts 2010: 8).

New elections were held in January 2003. The two winners CDA (44 seats) and the PvdA (42 seats) began coalition talks,<sup>86</sup> which continued until April 2003 but ultimately failed (Economist Intelligence Unit 2003c). In the meantime, the final statement from the interim government regarding their position on the war came on March 17, 2003. Prime Minister Balkenende declared that “the absence of a further SC [UN Security Council] resolution has consequences for the national support (*draagvlak*) for further Dutch involvement. Consequently, the Netherlands will not give an active military contribution with respect to Iraq” but that it

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<sup>84</sup> The Davids Commission was formed in 2009 to independently investigate the foreign policy decision-making process surrounding the Dutch decision to support the war in Iraq. The Commission was proposed by Balkenende himself, who had opposed to such an inquiry for years (Dauids Commission 2010: 519).

<sup>85</sup> Dissenting opinions exist on the ‘real’ Dutch intent. Wijk, for instance, implies that the government’s original intention was to officially join the war coalition like Denmark and argues that “during the [Iraq] crisis the country was run by the outgoing Cabinet which lacked the power to make firm policy decisions. As a result, the government was unwilling, probably politically incapable to co-sign the letter of the ‘gang of eight’” Wijk (2007: 157).

Although being a caretaker government might have a hand-tying effect in some cases, this view is not sustainable in the Dutch case for several reasons. First, the Davids Commission report quoted above clearly suggests that actively participating in the war militarily had never been a viable option for the government anyway. More importantly, an *Economist Intelligence Unit* report on the Netherlands stated in December 2002 that the country “seem[ed] prepared to provide military hardware to support the US in the region” (2002d: 7), alluding to the possibility of participation *despite* the caretaker position of the coalition. This suggests that the government was still politically capable to prepare for military support at that time, but chose not to pursue that option. In sum, the Dutch decision to give political but not military support cannot be interpreted in this case as a direct consequence of the government’s caretaker position.

<sup>86</sup> The Dutch parliament has 150 seats.

would support the war politically (Everts 2010: 9).<sup>87</sup> This position passed the parliament on March 18, 2003 (Davids Commission 2010: 522).

Following the collapse of the coalition talks between the CDA and the PvdA, CDA began to pursue VVD and D66 as possible coalition partners in a right-wing government. The negotiations began in April 2003 and ended on May 27<sup>th</sup> with success (Economist Intelligence Unit 2003c: 12). On June 6<sup>th</sup>, the new Balkenende cabinet “accepted participation of a Netherlands’ contingent in the US-led coalition occupation force (SFIR) of 1100 men, which, under British command, were to keep the peace in the southern province of *Al Muthanna*” (Everts 2010: 10). The next sections analyze the effects of the key explanatory factors of these commitments.

*Ideological Composition leads to Logrolling:* As Table 6.1 above also shows, the three coalitions across the volatile 2002-2003 period were noticeably different in their ideological composition. These differences had to be worked out for parties’ common political gains, and therefore they are expected to have a profound effect on the commitments made regarding the US-led war in Iraq.

First, consider the short-lived Balkenende government (CDA-VVD-LPF) that came to power in July 2002. All parties are located in the right of the political spectrum and all carry strong Atlanticist tones in their foreign policy priorities, a reliable signal in itself to expect that they would be willing to commit the Netherlands in the war alongside the United States and Britain. For instance, “the leader of the List Pim Fortuyn (LPF) said that Holland would leave its

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<sup>87</sup> Regarding the political necessity for a renewed UN mandate in Iraq, the Davids Commission report (2010: 524) finds that “from the outset, the administration took the view that a new Security Council mandate for the use of force was politically desirable, but not legally indispensable. The basis for this stance was the so-called ‘corpus theory’: the belief that, taken as a body, the various Security Council resolutions on Iraq passed since 1990 constituted a mandate for the use of force, which was still valid in March 2003.”

most important ally, the United States, isolated by refusing military support” (Beunderman 2003). The Liberals (VVD) are “by tradition transatlantic” (Wijk 2007: 153) and along with the LPF, they “wanted nothing less than full military support” for war (Everts 2010: 10). The CDA, on the other hand, “suggested that the Netherlands should seek to replace US forces elsewhere” (Everts 2010: 10), still offering military support for the war, albeit in its own, rather risk-averse way. In sum, all parties in government were in support for some kind of Dutch military role in the war, though by March 2003, they declared “political, but not military” support.

What compelled this government to commit less than it envisioned was the election results and the possibility of a new government between the CDA and the Labour Party (PvdA). Indeed, Wouter Bos, the leader of the PvdA, repeatedly stated that his party was opposed to the war and that “the Netherlands should not give ‘political support’ to the Americans” to which “the parliamentary leader of the CDA, Maxime Verhagen” responded “as ‘sad’” (Beunderman 2003, see also Kaarbo 2012: 105). Still, Everts (2010: 26) emphasizes the CDA’s position in anticipation to have the PvdA in the government by arguing that “Mr Balkenende could have insisted and persisted in his real conviction that Netherlands’ clear interest was to fully join the ‘coalition of the willing’. The fact that he did not should (also) be seen in the light of his wish to keep the door open to the PvdA as a new coalition partner.”

This line of analysis strongly supports the ‘compromise’ thesis, that is, coalitions yield ‘middle-of-the-road’ (Elman 2000: 99) foreign policies as policy preferences among coalition partners diverge. This is also the line of argument that Kaarbo (2012) makes in her recent book. What remains overlooked, however, is that when the future payoff is large enough, compromises on foreign policy could become so lopsided that commitment intensity can increase despite the level of policy incongruence among parties. This brings us to *logrolling*, or the mechanism that

explains how commitment intensity increased despite a government-in-the-making (CDA-PvdA), whose policy incongruence was even greater than its predecessor (CDA-VVD-LPF).

The coalition negotiation process that took place between the CDA and PvdA attest to this dynamic. The talks began as early as February 5<sup>th</sup> (Van Holsteyn and Irwin 2004: 162). By March 2003, the PvdA leader argued that “given the absence of a UN mandate, the PvdA would not support the war” (Everts 2010: 22). The *Economist Intelligence Unit* report from the same month argues that in the process of negotiations “the parties [CDA and PvdA] have clashed several times over the Iraq issue, which could prove a breaking point in the event of a US-led war against Iraq without UN authorisation [sic]” (Economist Intelligence Unit 2003b: 3).

The most remarkable instances of increased commitment intensity occurred by April 2003 when the Netherlands “provided military hardware to support the US in the Gulf region” (Economist Intelligence Unit 2003d: 1). This was a clear evidence of the increase in commitment intensity from political support to material support, *while the CDA was continuing to negotiate with the PvdA*. Everts (2010: 10) accounts that by this time the PvdA “accepted the war (as a fact of life) but rejected any military participation of the Netherlands,”<sup>88</sup> and that the parties “agreed to disagree over the issue” (Economist Intelligence Unit 2003d: 1).

Even more dramatically, Kaarbo (2012: 106) explains that when the government “deployed a submarine and frigate to the Middle East under US military command,” thus explicitly making resource commitments, “Labour balked, arguing that this action violated the

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<sup>88</sup> The Netherlands also sent Patriot missiles to Turkey in February 2003 to defend this NATO ally against the possibility of escalation (Everts 2010: 8), which “the government labeled these weapons ‘defensive’” (*Der Spiegel* 2010b) to respond to criticisms framing weapons deployment to an ally as active military participation in the Iraq war. The PvdA, on the other hand, eventually agreed on the missile deployment once the French, Belgian and German governments also “dropped their objections” in response to Turkey’s official request (Economist Intelligence Unit 2003b: 15).

agreement because it went beyond political support.” The accounts suggest that the PvdA neither rejected any of these moves nor left the negotiation table in protest. To the contrary, “within a week [of deployments], Labour seemed to soften its stance when Balkenende and Bos agreed that the Netherlands was part of the US-led coalition and that the US intervention was justified under UN resolution 1441” (Kaarbo 2012: 106).

Notice that the initial position of the outgoing government, ‘political, but not military support’, which arguably was taken in anticipation of a possible PvdA partnership in government, evolved into a position where the CDA-led administration openly provided material capabilities and more explicit support for the Iraq war, while negotiating with a party whose original position was to oppose either political or military involvement. What explains the increase in commitment intensity in the face of such high levels of policy incongruence between the key parties?

Put simply, the PvdA was eyeing the executive office. Van der Meulen and Soeters (2005: 557) suggest that the interaction of the PvdA with the CDA despite the deep disagreements over Iraq “did leave open their [PvdA’s] chances of participating in a new center-left government.” Several pieces of evidence suggest that the PvdA continued the negotiations despite the intensification of commitments in Iraq in an effort to participate in the next government. The party did not give up on negotiations earlier even though it was opposed to the deployment of the Patriot missiles in Turkey (Everts 2010: 8), and it “dodged the issue” when the CDA almost playfully criticized it for being “ambiguous” on Iraq a week before the negotiations formally began (Everts 2010: 20). Furthermore, it was revealed months later (Economist Intelligence Unit 2003e: 15) that the PvdA had even agreed with the CDA at the time of government negotiations to send Dutch marines to Iraq after the war!

The logrolling trend continued with the progressive-democrat D66 when the coalition talks collapsed between the CDA and the PvdA later in April 2003 due to disagreements over government spending (Kaarbo 2012: 106). The D66 was originally opposed to Dutch involvement in Iraq. During the final parliamentary debate on Iraq on March 18, the D66 leader Boris Dittrich stated “This is not our war. We think that the government should give neither political nor military support” (Everts 2010: 23). The D66 position changed within merely two months when they formed a new government with the CDA and the VVD, however. Kaarbo (2012: 106, emphasis added) refers to her interview with Jan Hoekema, a member of the D66, to argue that the party “had strongly opposed the war but agreed to concede the issue *in exchange for a role in the government.*” By August 2003, 1100 Dutch peacekeepers were sent to southern Iraq to replace the US marines in the region (The New York Times 2003) with the consent of this new tripartite minimum winning coalition.

In conclusion, the deep ideological divisions between the Dutch political parties that spilled over to their policy positions regarding the Iraq war were mitigated by their greater expectations concerning the executive office. Aspiring to participate in a new governing coalition, both the PvdA and the D66 dropped their vociferous opposition against Dutch involvement in Iraq and conceded to steps taken by the CDA and the outgoing government toward greater involvement and intensified commitments in Iraq.

*Public Opinion:* Was the public opinion influential in the Dutch decision to support the war politically? Did public opinion have a large enough explanatory power to outweigh the effects of government composition? Polls suggest that the public opinion was noticeably against the war in Iraq: the findings of one study (Everts and Isernia 2005: 316-317) reflect that by March 18—the day of the parliament’s decision on Iraq—those who supported the war were 33

per cent while 63 per cent were opposed to it. The same study reports that the polls showed that a dramatic 51 per cent of all respondents were entirely opposed to the Netherlands' military participation in the war, including the option to "replace American troops elsewhere" (Everts and Isernia 2005: 316-317), which, as argued earlier, was a possibility that had been considered by the CDA in the run up to the final decision (Everts 2010: 10).

Clearly, the public was adamantly opposed to Dutch participation in the war. Not even the public perceptions of threat, which would have had a 'rally 'round the flag' effect, provided enough justification for it: scholars have suggested "that Saddam Hussein's Iraq constituted a threat" across several European countries including the Netherlands," though "much more diverse was the range of opinions on the question of what to do about that threat" (Everts and Isernia 2005: 273). Among those possibilities, direct military involvement was not an option.

Did the public opinion against Dutch participation influence the commitment behavior of the government? Whereas isolating the effect of public opinion from other factors could be a difficult task in itself, it is much easier to identify the direction of influence when politicians refer to the mood of the public to make their point. Everts (2010: 19-20) offers a smart way to measure the effect of public opinion on foreign policy by looking at the frequency with which the political parties in the parliament referred to the low public opinion ratings to communicate their positions opposing Dutch involvement in the war. Using this measure, he concludes that "public opinion did not act as a direct constraint" for the governing parties but it "was interpreted, mediated, and instrumentalized by the various parties in parliament" (Everts 2010: 25) to limit the commitment options of the government. Public opinion was against Dutch involvement in the war, and it was utilized by the political parties in the opposition frequently to justify their preferences.



The indirect effect of the public opinion on the Dutch decision to provide political but not military support can be best observed by Prime Minister Balkenende's statement on March 17, 2003, when he declared the official position of his cabinet: "Nationally there is no broad support for active participation by the Netherlands in actions against Saddam," Balkenende said. "I am referring to the feelings in society, *as well as to the level of support within parliament*. Therefore the cabinet has decided that it can politically back-up action against Iraq, but that it will not provide any military contribution" (Van der Meulen and Soeters 2005: 548, emphasis added).

When we look at the level of public support for deploying Dutch troops for peacekeeping purposes *after the war*, "some 60 percent of the Dutch supported participating in peacekeeping and nation building" by April 2003, four months before the deployment took place. Following the news of a Dutch casualty in southern Iraq by "May 2004, a majority of around 55 percent did not want to prolong the mission, not because of the first casualty, but rather because of a negative judgment about how things were going in Iraq" (Van der Meulen and Soeters 2005: 557). Despite the increase in public opposition towards the Dutch mission in Iraq, the mission did not officially end until March 2005 (Agence France Presse, 2005). In other words, the Dutch public opinion somewhat correlated with the troop deployment but there was no direct link between public opinion and the extent of the mission.

To conclude, public opinion clearly had a role in the commitment decision of the government by March 2003, most noticeably through those political parties which utilized the poll results to justify their positions against war. More critically, however, the fact that the commitment behavior (namely, providing political support to the US) remained consistent across the period that saw a caretaker government, a possible grand coalition, and a new center-right coalition that roughly stretched between September 2002—when the Minister of Foreign Affairs

delivered the initial statement to the Parliament—and May 2003, when the new coalition was struck between the CDA, VVD and D66, shows that public opinion fails to provide a *consistent, sustainable* explanation for the Dutch political support for war. Furthermore, public opinion against Dutch participation in the war cannot explain the incremental commitments during February-April 2003, when the government negotiations continued to take place between the CDA and the PvdA.

*Threat to National Survival:* To what extent were the Dutch commitments in the US-led war motivated by perceptions of national threat? A ‘national threat’ explanation expects that partisan differences will be put aside in making commitment decisions to protect the nation, or in other words, that commitment decisions would be entirely driven by national security concerns. The evidence of high threat perception posed by Iraq or its WMDs against the Dutch national security is slim to support this hypothesis. Unlike the political atmosphere in Denmark, there was no overwhelming rhetoric of national threat in the Netherlands regarding the Saddam regime to justify military contribution, as the above analysis of the Dutch public opinion also suggests.

Some Dutch politicians still empathized with the ‘free world against the tyranny’ rhetoric and adopted broader frameworks such as ‘international sources of threat’ and ‘terrorism’ to contextualize the intervention and to stand in solidarity with the US, however. To that end, a *Washington Times* op-ed by the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time is informative: “the world is a dangerous place, and we can only deal with these dangers by working together,” wrote Jaap de Hoop Scheffer (CDA) in June 2003 and argued that “to effectively counter the threats facing us, coalitions of the willing may be sometimes necessary” (De Hoop Scheffer

2003; see also Wijk 2007: 156).<sup>89</sup> Nevertheless, there did not exist any overwhelming rhetoric of national threat comparable to the scale observed in Denmark to garner political and public support to commit Dutch capabilities for the war in Iraq.<sup>90</sup>

*Political Leadership:* As argued earlier, the influence of key actors in foreign policy decision-making processes may also drive governments toward behavioral choices that are not predicted by their ideological composition. In his analysis of 12 foreign policy cases from the Netherlands since the end of the Second World War, Everts (1990: 132) finds that personal involvement matters in foreign policy behavior as a motivating factor, if not as a direct explanation of commitment. Specifically, he argues that “it does help, but it is not essential if the minister is personally committed to the issue in question” to see the implementation of a foreign policy initiative. I focus on the Prime Minister, Jan Peter Balkenende and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, to test these expectations.

First, it is necessary to understand where the Prime Minister is located in the Dutch foreign policy decision-making environment. Several authors contend that the prime ministers in the Netherlands are institutionally weak compared to their European counterparts (Andeweg and Irwin 2005; Kaarbo 2012). It is also argued more recently, however, that “the position of the Prime Minister has been strengthened,” while the extent of her prime ministerial power could be contingent upon personal as well as situational factors (Andeweg and Irwin 2005: 123).

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<sup>89</sup> Note that Jaap de Hoop Scheffer’s statement is one of the most significant political declarations of Dutch support for NATO’s role in international stability and peacekeeping; clearly communicating the pro-Atlanticist orientations of the country’s foreign policy framework. It also echoes the historical trajectory of Dutch security and defense priorities described earlier.

<sup>90</sup> The rhetoric of threat somewhat resonated with the Dutch public following the war. Despite the decrease in public support for the post-war Dutch presence in Iraq as explained earlier, “politicians and public opinion were especially adamant about the impossibility of shortening (let alone immediately ending) the deployment” because “that would be “giving in to terror” (Van der Meulen and Soeters 2005: 549).

Despite domestic institutional limitations, the “presidentialization of politics” (Fiers and Krouwel 2005) across parliamentary regimes accelerates the speed with which the prime ministers become central figures, including the Netherlands (Andeweg 2008: 267). A more recent dynamic that reinforces this trend in the Dutch context is the role of the prime minister in the European Union as head-of-government. “The Treaty of Amsterdam also gives the Prime Minister a formal position with regard to the formulation of the common foreign and security policy of the EU,” Andeweg and Irwin (2005: 123) explain, thereby alluding to the increased foreign policy visibility of the prime minister vis-à-vis the governing cabinet. Kaarbo (2012: 78) concludes that in the post-Cold War era, this visibility “result[ed] in competition with the foreign minister and more politicization of foreign policy.” For these reasons, it is meaningful to expect that the leadership of the Dutch Prime Minister would have an influence on the Iraq war decision.

Evidence suggests, however, that the role of the Dutch Prime Minister, Jan Peter Balkenende, in the 2003 decision to join the Iraq war was insignificant and even non-existent, particularly when compared to his Danish counterpart, Anders Fogh Rasmussen. The most important statement to support this claim comes from the Davids Commission report on the Iraq War, which concludes that “the Prime Minister took little or no lead in debates on the Iraq question. He left the matter of Iraq entirely to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Only after January 2003 did the Prime Minister take a strong interest in the issue. However, by that time, the stance defined by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was firmly established as government policy” (Davids Commission 2010: 529, quoted in Pijpers 2009: 50). In other words, neither the decision-making process that technically began in the last quarter of 2002 nor the deliberations on the possibility

of Dutch commitment in the war had been driven by Mr. Balkenende, even when he became a more central actor in the process by early 2003.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, therefore remains as the only key player in the decision-making environment in this period, whose personal motives could have played into the decision to give political support for the war. If the Ministry was able to ‘lock-in’ the government to this particular level of commitment as the Davids Commission report suggests, it could very well be that the personal interests of the Minister himself had played a role. The institutional strength of the Foreign Affairs Ministry in the Dutch political system further provides the bureaucratic means for Jaap de Hoop Scheffer to pursue this possibility.<sup>91</sup> The Commission Report states that the Minister began to inquire about the Iraq war as early as August 2002—three months before the US officially asked the Dutch to assist them in Iraq (Pijpers 2009: 53)—and by the time he gave the first statement on the issue to the Parliament in September 2002 “neither the Cabinet, nor Prime Minister Balkenende, nor Defence Minister Korthals were previously consulted about [its] content” (Davids Commission 2010: 529; quoted in Pijpers 2009: 50).<sup>92</sup>

To what extent the personal motivations of the Foreign Affairs Minister played a role in the Dutch decision to commit politically to the Iraq war is open to debate. On the one hand, scholars such as Wijk believe that the decision to support the US politically but not militarily

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<sup>91</sup> Baehr (1980: 226) argues that the Minister of Foreign Affairs is a dominant actor in the Netherlands, from whom “most initiatives in the realm of foreign policy originate.” In human rights foreign policy issues, for instance, “the members of the parliament tend to give the Foreign Minister considerable political freedom” (Baehr 2000: 9). Furthermore, “as long as he assures himself of the overall support of his colleagues in the (coalition) cabinet,” Baehr continues (1980: 226), “it is very difficult even for a parliamentary majority to challenge his position.”

<sup>92</sup> This observation runs against the insights of Sobel and Shiraev (2003: 290) who write that “in the Netherlands, important foreign policy decisions will not be taken by the minister of foreign affairs, but rather by the cabinet as a whole.”

“turned out to be a brilliant move which helped clear the way for Jaap de Hoop Scheffer becoming NATO’s new Secretary General” (2007: 158), suggesting that career motives were critical in explaining the commitment decision.

The fact that the executive branch was sidelined in the early stages of decision-making clearly supports claims on the bureaucratic and political influence of the Foreign Ministry and by that token, the Minister himself. On the other hand, the report of the Davids Commission concludes that despite the political influence of the Ministry in the decision-making process, there were no personal motivations on the part of Jaap de Hoop Scheffer to pull the country into giving political support for the war (Davids Commission 2010: 533, quoted in Pijpers 2009: 54) at the expense of the preferences of the government at the time. In sum, the individual-level factors focusing on the Prime Minister or the Minister of Foreign Affairs remain insignificant in explaining the Dutch decision to provide political support in the 2003 Iraq war.

## **Conclusion**

The 2003 Dutch behavior towards participating in the war in Iraq provides critical insights on the foreign policy behavior of minimum winning coalitions. As hypothesized in Chapter 2, the expectation was that when policy incongruence increased among the parties in minimum winning coalitions, their commitment intensity would decrease. This expectation was in line with the veto players explanation in Comparative Politics as well as the several studies in the literature that have argued for the propensity of minimum winning coalitions to arrive at compromise solutions and “middle-of-the-road” (Elman 2000: 99) behavior in their foreign policies. However, Chapter 4 has shown that contrary to the expectations, commitment intensity

increases when policy incongruence increases among the parties that make up a minimum winning coalition.

First and foremost, the case analysis presented in this chapter illuminates this surprising finding regarding the commitment intensity of minimum winning coalitions. The case has revealed that the most important reason why higher levels of policy incongruence lead to higher levels of commitment intensity in minimum winning coalitions is logrolling: as political parties anticipate in being in government—a major ‘side-payment’, they yield and go along with the more intense foreign policy preferences of their partners. Logrolling remains the strongest explanation for the incremental resource commitments that the Dutch provided to the war in Iraq during the government negotiations that took place between two ideologically distant parties, the Christian Democrats (CDA) and the Labour Party (PvdA), in 2003.

In other words, the prospect of securing office seats is a major incentive for political parties to engage in *logrolling* and agree on making international commitments even when we expect the ideological differences among these parties to predict otherwise. In this sense, the qualitative analysis of the Dutch decision has made an important call to look beyond the decisional ‘moment’ delineated by the composition of the government as analyzed by the regression models presented in Chapter 4. The Dutch case study has revealed that it is necessary to capture the long-term policy, or in this case, *office*, preferences of the parties. These long-term factors help predict whether the level of policy incongruence caused by the parties’ ideological differences could be mitigated by guaranteeing future political gains, therefore facilitating more intense international commitments.

The analysis has also found that assertive political leadership, public opinion, and threat to national survival were either insignificant or inconsistent factors in explaining the Dutch

behavior in Iraq. Contextually, the competitive policy-making context of Dutch politics encouraged all political parties to include the Iraq issue as a top agenda item.

Furthermore, the domestic-level explanation based on the inter-party dynamics of coalition politics presented in this chapter has revealed that international-historical factors did not overwhelm the Dutch government's decision to make commitments in regarding Iraq. At best, they provide a hospitable context that facilitates the decision. Even though the Netherlands has generally favored the United States and the transatlantic alliance as their partner at the international level, their domestic political dynamics, most importantly the ideological composition of their multiparty governments, played a major role in influencing the ways in which they dealt with the decisions to join the war in Iraq.

The Dutch case has also highlighted the interaction between domestic and international politics. Foreign policy does not take place in vacuum. To the contrary, governments that follow each other are invariably confronted with the foreign policy issues that they inherit from their predecessors. The interaction between the *change* in government and the *continuity* in foreign policy compels the scholars of Comparative Foreign Policy to scrutinize the fluidity of this relationship. This case analysis was therefore informative as it has investigated two governments, an outgoing government and an incoming government, *as well as* a government in-the-making, to demonstrate how the domestic political changes influence the ways in which these governments behave at the international level. It has shown that the decisions to engage in international commitments turn out to be contingent on the dynamics of government formation.

This chapter has complemented the empirical contributions of Chapters 4 and 5 by providing an in-depth look at the mechanism and the alternative explanations that further illuminate how minimum winning coalitions engage in international commitments. As such, this



chapter has joined Chapters 4 and 5 by helping to bridge the ‘quantitative-qualitative gap’ in the study of coalition foreign policy. The next chapter brings together these empirical discussions to visualize the ‘coalition politics framework’ offered in this dissertation.

## CHAPTER 7

### NUANCE AND PARSIMONY IN COALITION FOREIGN POLICY:

#### WHAT DO WE KNOW, WHERE DO WE GO?

In her recent book on coalitions and foreign policy choices, Kaarbo (2012: 14) makes a compelling point by arguing that “while the research on coalition formation and termination is voluminous, considerably less is known about the life of coalitions between birth and death and the effects on government policy.” Kaarbo is not alone. Many other scholars have raised similar concerns in the past (Bueno de Mesquita 1975, Laver and Shepsle 1990; 1996), pointing out the lack of studies on the policy processes and the outcomes that take place during the life of multiparty governments. More recently, Warwick (2001: 1213-14) has argued that this weakness in the literature is due to the understanding that policy-making is not as “readily measurable” as government formation and termination are. Ultimately, the consensus has been that we lacked an understanding of the factors that drove policy-making in coalitions. For scholars of international politics, this puzzle has bloomed into a new research avenue on coalition foreign policy.

The extant literature on coalition foreign policy, including some of Kaarbo’s recent work (Kaarbo and Beasley 2008, Kaarbo 2012), however, has considered coalitions as a “homogenous” (Clare 2010: 967) category that could be compared to single-party governments to explain foreign policy behavior in parliamentary democracies. Furthermore, most contributions in this area have taken the foreign policy-making capacity of minority coalitions for granted, arguing that their size vulnerability in the parliament would lead to moderate foreign policies at best. Despite the earlier research on the foreign policy influence of critical junior

parties as well as the Comparative Politics research on coalitions, these studies have therefore largely dismissed the effect of the mathematical organization of parties in these governments and how it would lead to a variation in their foreign policy outputs. Ultimately, the empirical findings of these efforts have been inconclusive.

More recent work on coalition foreign policy has factored in another source of variation in these types of governments to explain their international behavior: party ideology. They have argued that parties enter into coalitions with distinct sets of preference by way of their ideological backgrounds, which leads to a multitude of viewpoints on foreign policy that must be negotiated before the government takes a position at the international level (Rathbun 2004, Clare 2010). Most studies, however, have focused on how the overall ideological placement of the coalition affects their belligerence, instead of showing how ideological cohesiveness leads to foreign policy choices in general. As a result, the role of ideology in coalition foreign policy has largely remained understudied. We have continued to lack an understanding of how the ideological composition of *all* parties in a government—not just the critical ones in majority coalitions—influenced foreign policy behavior.

This dissertation has pushed this debate toward three new directions by asking one research question: *how does the mathematical and ideological composition of parliamentary governments affect their foreign policy behavior—specifically, their international commitments?* With the help of this question, the project has first illustrated how political parties contribute to the strength and stability of coalition governments to argue that the dichotomous understanding of single- and multi-party governments is inadequate to capture the variation in the foreign policy behavior of parliamentary regimes. Second, it has highlighted the importance of ideological cohesion as a key dimension of coalition governments to make the case that in order to explain their foreign policy one must also consider their ideological composition, majority and minority

alike. Finally, the project has offered to go beyond international conflict—a sliver of international occasions that democracies engage in daily—or, for that matter, beyond the more controversial terms such as ‘extreme’ or ‘aggressive’ to define foreign policy behavior. Instead, it introduced a much more comprehensive definition, *commitment*, which captures the governments’ use of resources and binding verbal behavior that increases the constraints on their future behavior by generating expectations in the eyes of others.

As a result, the dissertation has offered a ‘government composition’ approach by unpacking coalitions along mathematical and ideological dimensions toward developing a ‘coalition politics framework’ to explain the intensity of international commitments in parliamentary democracies. To establish the theoretical foundations of this contribution, it has relied extensively on the Comparative Politics theories, namely the veto players and clarity of responsibility approaches, as well as the ‘policy viability’ explanation. As Chapter 2 has discussed, these theories have framed the research puzzle and have been further refined to test the government composition explanation across a series of quantitative and qualitative empirical analyses.

Indeed, to undertake this research puzzle, the dissertation has introduced a multi-method research design by employing quantitative and qualitative methodologies. As discussed in Chapter 3, the goal of the multi-method approach was three-fold. First, it would help provide the big picture by revealing the statistical relationships between government composition and commitment intensity with a quantitative component. Second, it would justify the ‘government composition’ explanation by uncovering the mechanisms that link coalitions to their commitment behaviors with a qualitative component. Third and by the same token, it would situate these relationships within the greater domestic-, international-, and even individual-level contexts to

test the performance of the ‘government composition’ approach against a series of alternative explanations on these levels, such as public opinion or political leadership, that are often utilized in foreign policy analysis.

Ultimately, the vision of the dissertation has been to offer a multilevel, multicausal analysis of foreign policy behavior in parliamentary regimes as advised by the long pedigree of scholarship in Comparative Foreign Policy—the home field of this project. To accomplish this, the dissertation has limited its explanatory scope to European parliamentary regimes, where coalitions have been the dominating institutional outcome for decades. It has also chosen to focus on the post-Cold War period, when international systemic factors no longer overwhelm the foreign policy decisions of states—not least the smaller ones that are observed across Europe.

The overview of the project presented above brings us to its conclusions and hence the purpose of this concluding chapter. This chapter provides a discussion of the findings from this project and presents the ‘coalition politics framework’ that is derived from the quantitative and qualitative analyses offered in Chapters 4, 5, and 6. Next, the chapter builds on these conclusions to discuss the contributions of the project. Undoubtedly, science is a cumulative endeavor, where the end of an inquiry invariably calls for the need to start anew. To that end, this chapter concludes by reflecting on the limitations of the project and suggesting some future research trajectories.

### **What Do We Know? Theoretical Contributions and the ‘Coalition Politics Framework’**

The introductory chapter of this dissertation has asked: “Is the ‘single-party versus coalition’ dichotomy emphasized by Kaarbo (2012) and others enough to capture the variation in parliamentary governments to explain their international behavior?”

The quantitative empirical findings of the dissertation have established that the answer is a firm “No.” The results of the multilevel regression analyses presented in Chapter 4 have concluded that, once unpacked, the types of coalition governments and their ideological diversity together affects the commitment intensity of their regimes in different directions. Theoretically, this conclusion was possible through the refinement of the veto players and the clarity of responsibility theories, as well as with the systematic testing of the ‘policy viability’ and ‘fragmented opposition’ explanations. In this sense, the project has made an important contribution to the study of foreign policy by bridging the gap between the puzzles of International Relations and the analytical tools of Comparative Politics.

First, the quantitative analyses have demonstrated that while the clarity of responsibility mechanism explains the increase in the commitment intensity of oversized coalitions all else being equal, the subsequent analyses have also shown that this explanation cannot be sustained once new, ideologically diverse parties join an oversized coalition and increase its policy incongruence. In other words, the results have shown that the diffusion of responsibility in oversized coalitions does not provide a constant source of political opportunities to engage in high levels of commitments. Instead, a high level of ideological diversity in oversized coalitions reverses the advantages of responsibility diffusion and leads to a decline in their commitment intensity. Therefore, the ideological composition of oversized coalitions imposes a mediating effect on their foreign policy behavior.

This, in fact, was precisely the mechanism that played out in Israel, a parliamentary democracy that incidentally remains outside of the scope of this study, in the run up to the 2005 territorial disengagement in Gaza. Even though the government led by Ariel Sharon at the time was an oversized coalition that included several right-wing parties such as the Likud (40 seats),

secular Zionist Shinui (15), the ultranationalist National Unity – Yisrael Beitenu (7), and the religious Zionist NRP (6) parties (Spruyt 2009: 29; Diskin and Hazan 2007: 707) in the 120-seat parliament, the severe ideological disagreements among these parties led to a government crisis caused by Sharon’s plan to dismantle the Israeli settlements in Gaza. As a result, all three of the coalition partners resigned between June and December 2004 (Spruyt 2009), leaving Likud alone. In other words, the oversized coalition ended up far away from enjoying the benefits of responsibility diffusion owing to its acute ideological diversity. To the contrary, the policy incongruence among the parties in the government inevitably spilled over to foreign policy preferences, ultimately leading to its dissolution.

Moving forward, the results of the regression analyses presented in Chapter 4 have shown that minimum winning coalitions engage in more intense international commitments than single-party majority governments at increasing levels of policy incongruence. This is a surprising finding that runs contrary to the expectations of the veto players explanation. While the hypothesized relationship, presented in Chapter 2, called for a decrease in the commitment intensity of these governments at higher levels of ideological disagreements, the quantitative analysis has offered results in the opposite direction, therefore requiring further investigation as to the mechanisms that yield this relationship.

Finally, Chapter 4 has demonstrated that contrary to the existing view in the literature, minority coalitions do engage in more intense international commitments than single-party majority governments, as long as they leave the parliamentary opposition ideologically fragmented. The quantitative analysis has reached this finding through the use of a third variant of policy incongruence, *center is crossed*, which builds on the ‘policy viability’ theory (Laver and Budge 1992) as well as the ‘fragmented opposition’ explanation (Hagan 1993) to measure

whether the government includes parties from both the left and the right of the political spectrum. The underlying notion here is that the minority coalitions which include parties from both the left and the right of the political spectrum—in other words, minority coalitions that are ideologically *more* diverse than those which are purely-right or purely-left—leave the opposition parties ideologically away from each other. As a result, the ideological composition of the minority coalition effectively rules out the formation of ‘alternative majorities’ among the parliamentary opposition parties, which would otherwise have the political upper-hand to block or impede the commitment behavior of the government by commanding a majority of votes.

Table 7.1 below provides a summary of findings from the quantitative component of the dissertation. They conclude that neither the veto players nor the clarity of responsibility theories, even in their refined adaptations, provides a unified explanation to decipher the effects of government composition on commitment intensity. To the contrary, the results suggest that different explanations frame the relationships between government composition and the intensity of international commitments among the types of majority as well minority coalitions, especially when we take into account their policy incongruence.



Hypotheses	Policy Incongruence Excluded	Tables 4.2 (Standard Deviation)	Tables 4.3 (Ideological Range)	Tables 4.4 (Center crossed)
<b>(1)</b> Due to their size vulnerability, minority governments will be negatively associated with commitment intensity.	Yes	-	-	-
<b>(2a)</b> All coalition governments will be negatively associated with commitment intensity	Yes	-	-	-
<b>(2b)</b> All coalition governments will be positively associated with commitment intensity in their international behavior	No	-	-	-
<b>(3a)</b> After controlling for ideological differences, both oversized coalitions and minimum winning coalitions will have a positive relationship with commitment intensity.	-	Only oversized coalitions	Only oversized coalitions	No
<b>(3b)</b> After controlling for ideological differences, oversized coalitions will engage in more committed behavior than minimum winning coalitions.	-	No	No	No
<b>(4a)</b> At increasing levels of ideological disunity inside the government, oversized coalitions will be negatively associated with commitment intensity compared to single-party majority governments.	-	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>(4b)</b> At increasing levels of ideological disunity inside the government, minimum winning coalitions will be negatively associated with commitment intensity compared to single-party majority governments.	-	No (positive relationship)	No (positive relationship)	No (positive relationship)
<b>(5a)</b> Minority coalitions will be negatively associated with commitment intensity regardless of the ideological differences among the coalition parties.	Yes	No	No	Yes
<b>(5b)</b> If minority coalitions can ideologically fragment the parliamentary opposition, they will be positively associated with commitment intensity compared to single-party majority governments.	-	No	No	Yes

Table 7.1 Summary of Findings from Chapter 4

The results of the quantitative analysis clearly demonstrate the influence of the government composition variables on commitment intensity by particularly highlighting the size and the direction of the relationships. What the quantitative analysis still does not provide, however, is the mechanism behind these relationships. How does the composition of coalition governments lead to a variation their international commitments? Furthermore, how does this relationship perform against alternative explanations of foreign policy behavior? These questions intend to go beyond the statistical associations to scrutinize the empirical vigor of the ‘government composition’ explanation.

In an effort to respond to these questions, the dissertation has taken a qualitative approach in Chapters 5 and 6. The objective of these chapters is to respond to the above questions as well as to contextualize these relationships by situating them in their international and domestic political contexts. To do this, the chapters have utilized two sets of findings from the quantitative analysis. First, they have focused on the results concerning the policy viability of minority coalitions (*Hypothesis 5b*). Next, they studied the surprising results regarding the minimum winning coalitions (*Hypothesis 4b*), where the increasing levels of policy incongruence lead to an increase in commitment intensity, contrary to expectations.

To undertake these inquiries, Chapters 5 and 6 have presented three case analyses from Denmark and the Netherlands, where the predominant government type is minority and minimum winning coalitions, respectively, using the method of structured-focused comparison. Specifically, the chapters have evaluated the Danish decisions to participate in the 1990 Gulf War and the 2003 Iraq War, and the Dutch decision to support the 2003 war in Iraq. The case analyses have looked at a number of alternative explanations, including the logrolling dynamics among parties, public opinion, threats to national survival, and political leadership while

considering the mathematical and ideological composition of their governments at the time. The case studies further situated these commitment behaviors within their greater domestic and international political context.

First, the analysis in Chapter 5 regarding the Danish commitment in the Gulf blockade in 1990 through the contribution of military resources (namely, the naval corvette ship *Olfert Fischer*) has revealed that this behavior was primarily the result of the change in the ideological composition of the minority coalition in 1988. Therefore, it has provided empirical support for the ‘policy viability’ and the ‘fragmented opposition’ explanations.

The chapter has argued that as a result of the 1988 elections, the new government was formed as a hybrid minority coalition that ‘reached across the aisle’ and included parties from both the right and the left of the political spectrum, shifting Denmark away from the pure right-wing minority coalitions that had ruled the country since 1982. Indeed, this shift ended the six-year period known as the ‘footnote policy era’ in Danish foreign policy, where the pure right-wing ideological composition of the minority coalitions led to the establishment of a left-wing ‘alternative opposition’ in the parliament that stymied the government’s foreign policy activity, particularly its relationship with NATO. In other words, the ideological composition of the 1988 government effectively fragmented the parliamentary opposition, dissolved the ‘alternative opposition’ and ultimately led to the Danish decision to join the Gulf blockade two years later.

This analysis has revealed this mechanism in the absence of threats to Danish national survival, explicit logrolling among political parties to garner specific side-payments, or a decisive public opinion to influence the policy-making process. To be fair, international developments, specifically the UN mandate for the blockade, provided a context that further facilitated the decision. However, the fact that the assertive political leadership of the Foreign

Affairs Minister, Uffe Ellemann-Jensen, who had so adamantly supported activism in Danish foreign policy, was noticeably impeded by the dynamics of his minority coalition attest to the explanatory power of government composition on commitment behavior in this case.

A second analysis in Chapter 5 has looked at the Danish contribution in the 2003 Iraq War to observe how minority coalitions, even when they do not fragment the parliamentary opposition ideologically, can still engage in foreign policy commitments. Indeed, contrary to the expectations of the ‘policy viability’ explanation, the right-wing minority coalition led by Anders Fogh Rasmussen was able to commit Denmark in the Iraq war.

The analysis of the 2003 decision has revealed, however, that this was an over-determined case where the outcome was influenced by multiple factors. Most central to the outcome was that the Liberal-Conservative minority coalition managed to engage in a logrolling relationship with the right-wing Danish People’s Party to get its support for war in return for new immigration and refugee policies that the DPP had asked for. The logrolling relationship simply pushed the minority coalition over the 50 per cent threshold in the parliament and helped garner the majority of votes to join the war. In addition, threat to Denmark’s national security posed by the Saddam Hussein regime was perceived across the board in the country’s political environment; public opinion for the parties remained high in the process and the lack of any significant public opposition to the war itself helped the government maintain their confidence; and the assertive personal involvement of the Prime Minister Rasmussen in the war together led to the conclusion that nothing stood in the way of the commitment decision.

Finally, the Dutch behavior in the 2003 war in Iraq was utilized in Chapter 6 to uncover the mechanisms that lead minimum winning coalitions towards more intense commitments—even when they suffer from increasing levels of policy incongruence. This case study has

revealed that ‘logrolling to gain office seats’ was the central mechanism that explains why minimum winning coalitions continue to commit more intense than expected even when the parties in these governments grow ideologically farther away from each other. As a major ‘side-payment’ in most parliamentary systems, the prospect of participating in government outweighs the negative effects of all other ideological differences on policy-making. As a result, parties yield to each other’s willingness to make stronger commitments at the international level. For instance, the analysis has found out that even though the D66 was originally opposed to providing Dutch support for the war, it eventually agreed with the Christian Democrats and the Liberals on sending troops during the post-war stage in Iraq in return for government seats.

Table 7.2 below presents a summary of these findings. The results suggest that even the most dramatic instances of foreign policy behavior, such as the decisions to participate in military operations, can be explained primarily by factors pertaining to the composition of the governments in these regimes as opposed to international power constellations. In effect, the qualitative and quantitative analyses together lend more confidence to expect that the ordinary, everyday affairs of these regimes on the world stage should be far more influenced by their domestic political structures than the international systemic concerns.

Independent Variables	DENMARK		THE NETHERLANDS
	1990 Gulf War	2003 Iraq War	2003 Iraq War
<i>Government Composition</i>	Minority coalition includes both left (Social Liberal) and right (Liberal, Conservative) parties	Minority coalition includes Right-wing parties (Liberal, Conservative) but maintains parliamentary majority with <i>ad hoc</i> support from the right-wing Danish People's Party	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Minimum winning coalition among Christian Democrats (CDA), Liberals (VVD) and List Pim Fortuyn (LPF)</li> <li>2. M.W. coalition in-the-making with CDA and Labour (PvdA)</li> <li>3. M.W. coalition among CDA, VVD, progressive-liberal D66</li> </ol>
<i>Logrolling</i>	No	Yes (with the Danish People's Party)	Yes (first with the PvdA and then with the D66)
<i>Threats to Survival</i>	No	Yes	No
<i>Public Opinion</i>	Varied, filtered through parties	Somewhat supportive	Not supportive
<i>Political Leadership</i>	MFA Ellemann-Jensen assertive and personally invested to commit, constrained by government and opposition parties	PM Anders Fogh Rasmussen is assertive and personally invested to support Danish participation	PM has no role in the planning stages of the decision, Foreign Affairs Minister's personal motivations open to speculation
<b>Commitment Behavior</b>	Denmark joins the naval blockade in the Gulf	Denmark signs 'the letter of eight' and sends military resources, participates in the war	The Netherlands decides to support the war 'politically but not militarily' at first, but makes incremental resource commitments later to militarily support the war

Table 7.2 Summary of Findings from Chapters 5 and 6

The results of the comparative case studies in Table 7.2 contribute to the findings of the regression analyses presented in Chapter 4 in a number of ways. First and foremost, the findings of the case studies highlight those areas where ‘policy incongruence’ is most important in explaining the change in the commitment intensity of foreign policy behavior in coalition governments. Whereas the ideological disagreements within *the parties that make up the opposition*—measured by the government’s ideological composition as a left-right hybrid coalition—is key to understanding the commitment behavior of minority coalitions as the Danish decision regarding the 1990 Gulf War has shown; when it comes to majority governments such as the minimum winning coalitions of the Netherlands, the focus shifts to the ideological disagreements within *the parties that make up the government*. Therefore, the findings presented Chapters 5 and 6 reiterate the conclusions of Chapter 4, as well as the theoretical framework introduced in Chapter 2.

Furthermore, the case analyses of the 2003 Danish and Dutch decisions to join the Iraq war have revealed that *logrolling* has often provided the mechanism that explains the abnormal outcomes vis-à-vis the hypothesized relationships. Specifically, while the Danish minority coalition used logrolling as an *ad hoc* mechanism to garner support for involvement in the US-led war in Iraq in exchange for domestic policies that mattered to its extra-governmental partner (the Danish People’s Party), the political parties in the Netherlands engaged in logrolling to secure office seats in the process of government formation in return for their support—or simply their ‘absence of resistance’—towards providing political and incremental resource commitment to the war. In other words, the ideological composition of the minority coalition in Denmark in 2003 and the minimum winning coalitions in the Netherlands which would otherwise lead to a decrease in the commitment intensity of these governments actually resulted in increased

commitments because the relationship between policy incongruence and commitment intensity has been explained primarily by *logrolling* among the political parties.

Second, the case analyses highlight the merits of contextualizing foreign policy behavior beyond statistical relationships by accounting for the international-historical setting that these decisions take place. For instance, Chapter 5 has shown that it is crucial to assess foreign policy behavior within the context of the state's foreign policy 'vision': in Denmark's case, this vision entailed international activism, which was incorporated in the case analysis as a contextual factor. The role of this factor on Danish foreign policy commitments was most visible in the country's 2003 commitment regarding the Iraq war.

Indeed, the contextualized discussion of foreign policy commitments in the qualitative component of this dissertation has further contributed to our understanding of the baseline commitment levels that each country exerted on the statistical relationships, demonstrated in the concluding sections of Chapter 4. As suggested above, revealing Denmark's activist foreign policy strategy throughout the post-Cold War period was useful towards justifying why this country stood as an outlier at the end of the quantitative tests with regards to its international commitment intensity when compared to the other European parliamentary democracies included in the dataset.

Moving from the international to the domestic context, the case analyses also reveal how the competitiveness of the political environment influences foreign policy. As Chapter 6 has discussed, the historical shift that occurred in the Netherlands with the process of 'depillarization' at the domestic level led to the politicization of foreign policy in this country. The 2003 Iraq case has shown that the Dutch political parties from diverse ideological backgrounds explicitly fought over the possibility of Dutch involvement in the military



operation. Therefore, this case study has helped conclude that the competitiveness of the policy-making environment is a factor that reinforces the influence of government composition on international commitments.

Ultimately, the attention to context and detail displayed in the case analyses have strengthened the conclusions drawn from statistical analyses reported in Chapter 4 by pointing out the mechanisms that justify the relationships between government composition and international commitments as well as situating these relationships vis-à-vis the contextual factors at the international, domestic, and individual levels.

The qualitative and quantitative components of this project therefore complement each other towards developing a ‘coalition politics framework.’ Introduced in the opening of this dissertation as its final goal, the framework brings together the contextual factors and the systematized relationships in order to explain the intensity of foreign policy commitments. In this sense, the framework should allow us to make more informed expectations about the international behaviors of coalition governments in European parliamentary regimes, given the information on the composition of these governments as well as the contexts that they are situated in. In the light of the discussion provided above, Figure 7.1 presents this framework below.

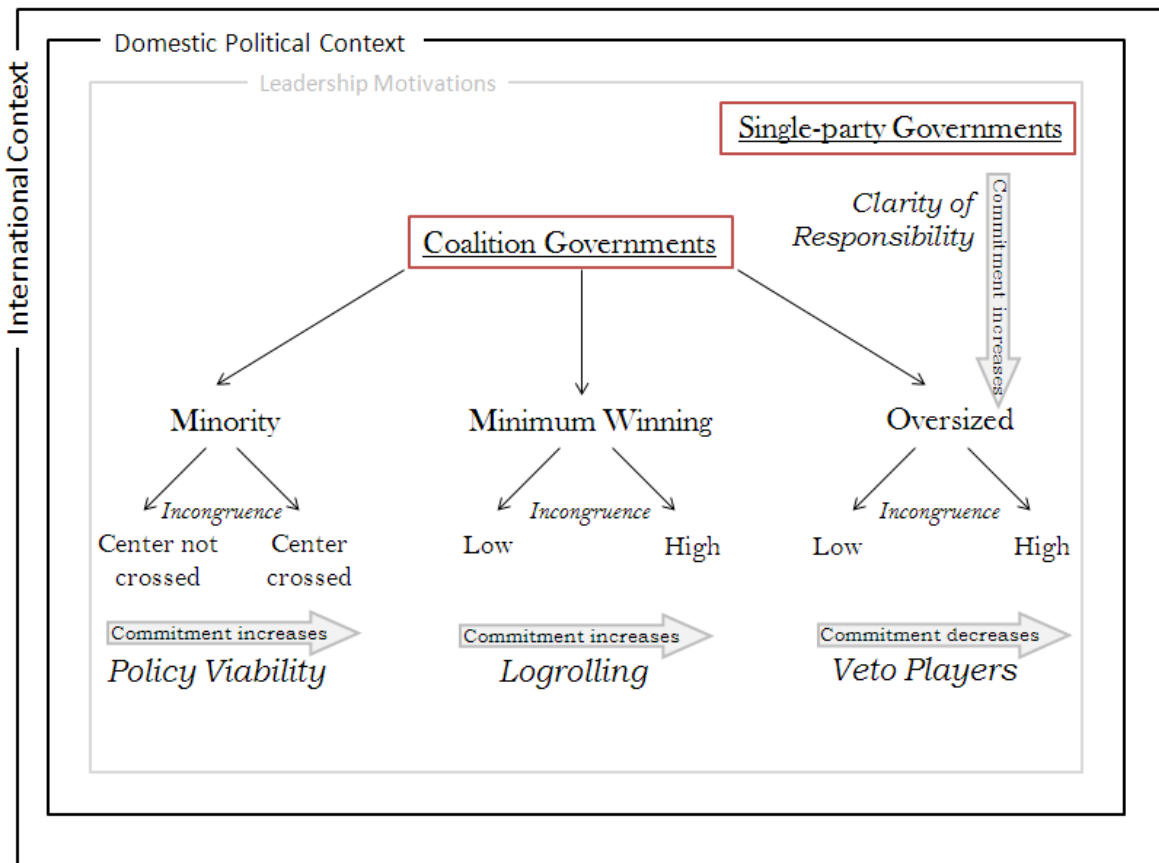


Figure 7.1 A Framework of Coalition Politics

As Figure 7.1 suggests, the composition of the government sits at the core of the framework, where the types of coalitions and their policy incongruence are presented in detail. The arrows suggest the mechanisms that explain the commitment intensity for each combination of government composition and denote the direction of this relationship. As the figure suggests, the only direct comparison between single- and multiparty governments can be made vis-à-vis oversized coalitions, in which more parties exist than necessary to maintain the majority status in the parliament.

Next, the figure zooms out to the contextual factors at the individual, domestic and international levels that could further influence the core ‘government composition’ explanation. The gray-scale of each factor suggests its explanatory power: as the analyses have shown, factors pertaining to leadership are often open to debate, and therefore their explanatory capacity cannot be ascertained. On the other hand, the domestic political factors, such as the perceived threats to national survival, the competitiveness of the regime, and public opinion *to the extent that it is filtered through parties* exert a stronger contextual effect on commitments. Ultimately, the historical foreign policy orientations of the state provide an overarching context to frame these relationships. In other words, these contextual factors delineate the possible range of behaviors that a government could engage in. Once the range is delineated, however, the framework implies that the specific form of behavior is determined primarily by the composition of the government.

Together, the quantitative and the qualitative findings provide the central explanatory factors and mechanisms, as well as the facilitating conditions that take place at the domestic, individual and international levels. As a result, they equally contribute to the coalition politics framework and illuminate the theoretical contributions of the dissertation. The dissertation therefore powerfully demonstrates the dynamism of coalition foreign policy that is above and beyond the dichotomous understanding of governments in parliamentary regimes, which has been suggested by the Comparative Foreign Policy literature for nearly two decades.

## **Methodological Contributions of the Study**

Clearly, this framework could not have been deciphered with quantitative or qualitative analysis alone. This brings us back to the merits of multi-method research designs in Comparative Foreign Policy, and more specifically, to the methodological contributions of this study.

The dissertation has stressed early on that a chronic weakness in the field of Comparative Foreign Policy has been the dilemma between an aspiration for “grand unified theories” of foreign policy and the need for “microlevel detail” to explain why nations behave the way they do in their international endeavors: “To what should we aspire: the richly detailed, comprehensively researched microanalyses of a few cases or the conceptually abstract, statistical/mathematical renderings of thousands of events?” asked Hudson and Vore (1995: 220) to reflect on the methodological underpinnings of this dilemma. Either alternative pushes the researcher toward the opposite ends of the methodological spectrum: whereas large-N research designs in foreign policy analysis enable scholars to test and predict the domestic and/or international causes of state behavior along spatial and temporal dimensions toward discovering parsimonious relationships, small-N case study designs help uncover the nuances that often go unnoticed and explicate the mechanisms that contextualize these relationships. The question we should ask ourselves is whether we really have to choose one of these methodological alternatives over the other.

Given the advantages of each methodological route for producing empirical analysis, the art of the scholarship therefore lies in the extent to which these two approaches—nuance and parsimony, context and generalizability—are brought together meaningfully without having to compromise on one for the other. This is precisely the aspiration that has driven this dissertation toward introducing a multi-method research strategy—nuance and parsimony do not have to be

treated like oil and water; they can be nicely blended by utilizing multiple methodologies. While quantitative and qualitative methodologies are certainly equipped with their own unique advantages for empirical analysis, their competitive characteristics should not preclude the possibility to utilize them in an interactive fashion. In other words, researchers, especially in the field of Comparative Foreign Policy, should not feel compelled to compromise on parsimony over nuance or vice versa.

This dissertation therefore contributed to the field of Comparative Foreign Policy by demonstrating that with meticulous research designs, we can achieve both. Indeed, each methodological component of the study was designed with a common goal that has driven the vision of the dissertation itself—to maintain the balance between parsimony and nuance. At every stage of the research design regardless of its quantitative or qualitative characteristics—from conceptualization to data collection and ultimately assessment—attentiveness to context and detail has been key.

Some examples of this effort included variable specification and the choice of quantitative and qualitative methods of assessment. As the theoretical and methodological discussions of this dissertation have shown, for instance, the key independent variables were designed to capture the more nuanced differences in government composition than the previous studies have achieved—and these refined variables were incorporated in both quantitative and qualitative designs. For example, conceptualizing and operationalizing a key independent variable, *policy incongruence*, in three different ways brought out the more refined understandings of ‘ideological diversity’ in multiparty governments and therefore also contributed to the discussion on the ideological cohesion of coalitions in parliamentary regimes.

The choice of specific methods for the quantitative and qualitative components has also followed from this methodological vision of the dissertation. For instance, an important argument raised earlier in this study concerned the merits of using multilevel (also known as “hierarchical linear”) modeling in regression analysis, which helps account for the biases that might be introduced by the context from which the observations are drawn. Indeed, differentiating the effects of context from the effects of intra-contextual factors is vital especially for studies such as the present dissertation, which adopts a *cross*-country approach to test an *intra*-country dynamic such as government composition.

The choice of the qualitative method was also driven with a similar understanding. Even though the major purpose of the qualitative component has been to stimulate the quantitative findings with alternative explanations using contextual evidence and detail, choosing ‘the method of structured-focused comparison’ (George 1979) helped maintain the systematic inquiry of foreign policy behavior as standardized questions are developed to assess the effect of each alternative explanation on the government’s commitment behavior. Ultimately, in each empirical component of the project, quantitative and qualitative alike, it has been demonstrated that maintaining the balance between systematization and generalizability on one hand and attention to detail and context on the other provided exceptional rigor and depth to the analyses.

### **Where Do We Go? Limitations of the Study and Future Research**

Despite its theoretical and methodological contributions, it would be immature to argue that this dissertation concludes the debate in our field on coalition foreign policy. While it certainly aspires to be a step towards expanding our knowledge in this area, it does not provide explanations for several other puzzles that still fall into its scope. For science is an iterative,

cumulative journey, what this contribution can offer now is a reflection on these limitations and a discussion of the pathways for future research.

For instance, looking at the ‘coalition politics framework’ presented in Figure 7.1, one can argue that one of the limitations of this study is that it does not respond to a key explanatory framework in foreign policy analysis—the bureaucratic-organizational approach (Allison 1971). The bureaucratic-organizational model concerns the ways in which policy-makers “are driven by the competing interests of their respective organizations” (Brummer 2013: 1) instead of partisan predispositions. In a recent study that utilizes this framework, Brummer (2013) argues that Germany’s decision to participate in the EU’s military operation in the Congo was reached at the end of a bargaining process between the Chancellor Merkel (CDU), the Defense Minister Jung (CDU) and the Foreign Minister Steinmeier (SPD) of the Christian Democrat-Social Democrat minimum winning coalition. The analysis demonstrates that it was not the party positions of these actors *per se*, but their organizational positions as the chancellor, the defense and the foreign ministers that influenced the decision to choose among the four alternatives to commit in this operation—“political support,” “military support,” “co-leadership” with France and participation with a “battlegroup” (Brummer 2013: 9). Indeed, due to their organizational interests, Brummer (2013) explains that Merkel and Jung supported entirely different commitment alternatives, even though they belonged to the same political party.

Clearly, the ‘coalition politics framework’ fails to answer this puzzle. Therefore, a future avenue of research for this project concerns the extent to which the bureaucratic-organizational interests of cabinet actors outweigh the partisan sources of policy preference in coalition governments. It is now time to reach beyond the ‘party dynamics’ of coalitions and zoom in on

their ‘ministerial dynamics’ following the footsteps of the recent contribution by Oppermann and Brummer (2013).

Another key puzzle that the ‘coalition politics framework’ fails to solve concerns the role of membership in international organizations and how it influences foreign policy behavior. For instance, the quantitative analysis in this dissertation has failed to capture the effect of European Union membership on the international commitments of its member states. We know from a plethora of studies on EU foreign policy, however, that the Union does affect national foreign policies and behaviors (Larsen 2005). Daehnhardt (2011) demonstrate, for example, that Germany’s foreign policy towards the Middle East is increasingly shaped by and aligned with the EU. In this sense, this project has yet to discover novel ways to measure the effect of international memberships on national foreign policy behaviors. This goes particularly for the role of the EU, given the scope of the project.

Indeed, moving beyond the limitations of the study, one future research implication of this project has to do with its geographical reach. Even though the dissertation has compellingly demonstrated that it is the first study to introduce so much finesse to the analysis of governments and their international behavior, the question that remains unanswered is whether the framework introduced here has the capacity to travel beyond Europe.

This question, as a matter of fact, concerns many scholars in our field. In March 2014, a group of prominent Comparative Foreign Policy scholars (many of whom have been referred to in this dissertation) convened for a workshop on coalition foreign policy at the International Studies Association Annual Meeting in Toronto, Canada. Following a series of debates on the current and future research projects in this field, the foremost question that emerged was whether



our collective efforts to explain the effects of government composition on foreign policy behavior can travel beyond the advanced industrial democracies of the West.

Indeed, the variables that are employed in the field—such as party ideology, a variable that is central to the analysis presented here—primarily measure a policy dimension whose evolution has roots deep entrenched in the history of Western European political development. That is to say, “the left–right ideological dimension may not be a relevant predictor of international behavior in non-European democracies, where party identity might be defined more in terms of regional orientation, ethnic or religious background instead” (Oktay 2014: 879). The evidence regarding the Israeli disengagement from Gaza discussed earlier in this chapter suggests that the explanation provided in the dissertation can certainly travel to regions outside of Europe, and thus gives us hope for the future. Still, providing geographical mobility to this study as a future avenue for research first and foremost depends on ensuring that the party ideology variables correctly capture the dimensions along which political competition takes place in the countries employed for empirical testing.

A second avenue for future research concerns the role of individual political actors in these governments and how they influence foreign policy behavior. The qualitative analyses presented in this dissertation remain at best speculative about the role of prime ministers and foreign affairs ministers in these cabinets toward making decisions of international commitment. As a result, the ‘coalition politics framework’ visualized in Figure 7.1 characterizes political leadership as a vague component in explaining international commitments.

To scrutinize the explanatory power of leadership on foreign policy behavior further, it is necessary to go back to our quantitative toolbox and design more systematic studies to test the ways in which political leadership and government composition interact to influence

international commitments. The seminal works by Hermann (2005) and Kaarbo and Hermann (1998) provide the starting point for this inquiry. These studies, among others, have frequently emphasized the need for bridging the gap between individual and domestic-institutional factors in studying government behavior at the international level. To this date, however, no quantitative framework exists to systematically examine the relationship between the psychological orientations of leaders and the constraints of their institutional environments, and how this relationship leads to foreign policy outputs. To that end, Hermann's *Leadership Trait Analysis* offers a rigorous quantitative approach, whose findings can be incorporated into existing models of government composition to test how leadership traits feed into government politics, which then translate into foreign policy behavior.

Last but not least, the theoretical framework introduced in this dissertation has a broader implication regarding the possible perverse effects of the 'clarity of responsibility' thesis for the international behavior of oversized coalitions. The dissertation has concluded that parties in oversized coalitions, *ceteris paribus*, benefit from the diffusion of responsibility in government, which helps them circumvent the electoral consequences of their policy failures. Little has been said, however, on whether the diffusion of responsibility also discourages coalitions from achieving major policy outcomes at the international level. For instance, could the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have already reached a resolution if single-party governments ruled Israel instead of oversized coalitions? Since the credit for success is expected to diffuse among the governing parties just as much as the blame would for failure, coalitions might choose to settle for moderate policy outcomes instead.

Therefore, moving forward, we should also begin to tackle the 'credit-taking' and 'blame-shifting' processes in coalition foreign policy, particularly among oversized coalitions.

Studying the major foreign policy issues such as territorial dispute resolution or European Union membership negotiations, where successful outcomes can lead to electoral gains, should reveal whether responsibility diffusion could also act as a disincentive for parties in oversized coalition governments.

As always, much work remains. The implications of this dissertation, however, encourage us to continue studying the foreign policy behavior of parliamentary democracies in the future—now with a rejuvenated interest.

## APPENDIX A - WEIS Event Types and Categories

Code	Event Type	Event Categories
01	Yield	<p>(011) Surrender, yield to order, submit to arrest, etc. This category requires explicit statement of surrender, or yield to a command or an order, or of submission to arrest</p> <p>(012) Yield position, retreat; evacuate. This category involves actual physical movement.</p> <p>(013) Admit wrongdoing; retract statement.</p>
02	Comment	<p>(021) Explicit decline to comment. This category is reserved for an expressed "decline to comment" statement by an official spokesperson. This category does not include a reported "failure to comment."</p> <p>(022) Comment on situation--pessimistic. This category is used only when the actor explicitly expresses the feeling that the situation is adverse or foreboding.</p> <p>(023) Comment on situation--neutral.</p> <p>(024) Comment on situation--optimistic. This category is used only when the actor explicitly expresses the feeling that the situation is favorable.</p> <p>(025) Explain policy or future position. This category is used when governments express their goals, hopes, policies, or future plans to others.</p>
03	Consult	<p>(031) Meet with at neutral site, or send note. This category is used for meetings at an unspecified or neutral site, or between a resident ambassador and the host country. This category applies, in addition, when notes are sent between nations but their content is unknown.</p> <p>(032) Visit; go to.</p> <p>(033) Receive visit; host.</p>
04	Approve	<p>(041) Praise, hail, applaud, condole. This category includes the "politeness" events such as expressions of gratitude, condolences, and ceremonial salutations..</p> <p>(042) Endorse other's policy or position; give verbal support.</p>
05	Promise	<p>(051) Promise own policy support.</p> <p>(052) Promise material support. This category specifies men and/or resource aid forthcoming.</p> <p>(053) Promise other future support action.</p> <p>(054) Assure; reassure. This category is used for expressions or reiterations of earlier pledges.</p>

Code	Event Type	Event Categories
06	Grant	(061) Express regret; apologize. (062) Give state invitation. (063) Grant asylum. This category includes both the announcement of a policy and reported cases of granting of refuge to nationals of other countries. (064) Grant privilege, diplomatic recognition; DE FACTO relations (sic), etc. (065) Suspend negative sanctions; truce. (066) Release and/or return persons or property.
07	Reward	(071) Extend economic aid (as gift and/or loan). (072) Extend military assistance. This category includes both men and material, in addition, joint military training exercises are coded in this category. (073) Give other assistance
08	Agree	(081) Make substantive agreement. (082) Agree to future action or procedure; agree to meet, to negotiate. This category includes the acceptance of invitations from other states.
09	Request	(091) Ask for information. (092) Ask for policy assistance. (093) Ask for material assistance. (094) Request action; call for. This category includes bids from United Nations membership and requests for asylum. (095) Entreat; plead; appeal to; help me. This category applies to requests made from a distinctly suppliant position, the actor nation pleading for aid or support.
010	Propose	(101) Offer proposal. (102) Urge or suggest action or policy.
011	Reject	(111) Turn down proposal; reject protest demand, threat, etc. (112) Refuse; oppose; refuse to allow.
012	Accuse	(121) Charge; criticize; blame; disapprove (122) Denounce; denigrate; abuse. This category often applies when derogatory adjectives embellish the accusation.
013	Protest	(131) Make complaint. (not formal) (132) Make formal complaint or protest . Protests are assumed to be formal unless otherwise stated.
014	Deny	(141) Deny an accusation. (142) Deny an attributed policy, action role or position.
015	Demand	(150) Issue order or command; insist; demand compliance, etc.

Code	Event Type	Event Categories
016	Warn	(160) Give warning. Occasionally the words "demand" or "threaten" are used in news items which should be coded as warnings.
017	Threaten	(171) Threat without specific negative sanctions. (172) Threat with specific non-military negative sanctions. (173) Threat with force specified. (174) Ultimatum; threat with negative sanctions and time limit specified.
018	Demonstrate	(181) Non-military demonstration; to walk out on. This category applies to activities such as marching, picketing, stoning, etc., when they are performed by citizens of one nation against another nation. The category also includes occasions when representatives to international meetings walk out in protest.  (182) Armed force mobilization. Exercise and/or display routine ceremonial displays such as weapons parades and "fly bys" are not included in this category.
019	Reduce Relationship	(191) Cancel or postpone planned event. (192) Reduce routine international activity; recall officials, etc. Events coded in this category must be connected with some on-going international problem, thus the usual rotations of foreign service officers or normal changes in foreign aid are not regarded as "reduction of relations." Embargoes, bans, and smaller activities do fall within this category. (193) Reduce or halt aid. (194) Halt negotiations. (195) Break diplomatic relations.
020	Expel	(201) Order personnel out of country. This category includes the expulsion of foreign individuals and the declaration of individuals as PERSONA NON GRATA (sic). (202) Expel organization or group.
021	Seize	(211) Seize position or possessions. The category may also be used when a nation militarily takes or occupies another's territory. (212) Detain or arrest person(s).
022	Force	(221) Non-injury obstructive act. When actual physical destruction is reported, demonstrations are coded in this category.

Code	Event Type	Event Categories
		(222) Non-military injury-destruction. This category also includes acts not committed by organized military forces such as terrorist bombings.
		(223) Military engagement. Notice that this category may often be "double-coded" because when two nations battle, each is an actor and each is a target of force.

*Source:* McClelland, C. (1978) *WEIS Dataset Codebook*. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research.

Table A.1 WEIS Event Types and Categories

## APPENDIX B – A Brief History of Measuring Commitments in Foreign Policy

Attempts to measure commitment in foreign policy behavior go back to the 1970s. In a study to explain the differences of international behavior between small and large states, for instance, East (1973: 566) has introduced a scale that distinguishes “low-cost” behavior from “high-cost” behavior by focusing on resource allocation—a key component of conceptualizing commitment, as Chapter 1 has argued. Specifically, East (1973) defines low-cost behavior as verbal behavior in general, which “involves no actual commitment of a state’s resources” and include “situations, threats, accusations, proposals, denials, promises,” whereas nonverbal behavior “*always* involves the actual commitment or utilization of resources” (East 1973: 567, emphasis in original).

Utilizing the CREON events dataset (Hermann, Salmore and East 1971), East’s (1973) 8-point scale ranges from cooperative deeds to conflictual deeds, where categories 1 through 4 indicate cooperative intent, desire, and evaluations, respectively, and categories 5 through 8 indicate conflictual actions with increasing intensity than go from evaluations to desires, intentions, and ultimately, deeds.

Despite being the first systematic study to categorize foreign policy events along a commitment intensity spectrum, East’s (1973) operationalization of commitment is limited as the interactive relationship between verbal and nonverbal behavior is significantly censored. The scale suggests that high-cost behavior only involves those at the extremes, *deeds*, which come about as a result of resource use, while all verbal behaviors, regardless of the variation in their intensity, are understood as low-cost. We know, however, that the literature on credible commitments has frequently shown that threats—a form of verbal behavior—are important components of state behavior in international relations. Leaders “often have strong incentives to



express threats or promises to act in order to generate support inside and outside the regime” (Hagan 1993: 94-95), which make threats a critical tool for leaders and thus a costly one should they fail to fulfill these inherently verbal behaviors. Despite acknowledging the increasing intensity of commitments from evaluations to desires to intentions, East’s conceptualization therefore still falls short of realizing the potential of studying the variation in the intensity of verbal action. Furthermore, ordering cooperative and conflictual behavior along the same scale with increasing values is hardly intuitive, making it more difficult to manipulate the values for analysis, especially from a quantitative viewpoint.

Following East’s (1973) initial attempt, Callahan’s scale of commitment intensity (1982a) can be understood as a corrective in this sense. He revises East’s (1973) scale to create a new 8-point scale that reorganizes the WEIS event categories, with the intention to operationalize commitment intensity with more finesse. Unlike its predecessor, the scale now ranges from -4 to +4, where the more negative values indicate more intense conflictual commitments and the more positive values indicate more intense cooperative commitments. Table B.1 below presents the revised East (1973) scale; the bolds indicate the additions by Callahan (1982a).

		VERBAL		NONVERBAL
	<i>Evaluation</i>	<i>Desire</i>	<i>Intent</i>	<i>Deeds</i>
	<b>(-1)</b>	<b>(-2)</b>	<b>(-3)</b>	<b>(-4)</b>
<i>Conflict</i>	Deny	Demand	Threaten	Force
	Accuse	Protest	Warn	Demonstrate
	Comment (Neg.)	Propose (Neg.)	Reject	Inc. Mil. Capability
		Request (Neg.)	Intend (Neg.)	Aid Opponent
			Reduce Relationship	
			Seize	
			Expel	
			Subvert	
	<b>(+1)</b>	<b>(+2)</b>	<b>(+3)</b>	<b>(+4)</b>
<i>Cooperation</i>	Comment (Pos.)	Request (Pos.)	Intend (Pos.)	Yield
	Approve	Propose (Pos.)	Offer	Grant
	<b>Consult</b>	Negotiate	Promise	Decrease Mil. Capability
			Agree	Consult
				Carry Out Agreement
				Reward
			Increase Relationship	

  
*Increasing Commitment to Action* *Action*

*Source:* Replicated from East, M. (1973). Size and Foreign Policy Behavior: A Test of Two Models, *World Politics* 25(4), pp. 569-570.

Table B.1 East's (1973) Operationalization of Foreign Policy Event Actions and Callahan's (1982a) Modifications (in bold)

Callahan's modifications to the original East scale also have weaknesses, however. First of all, my numerous rounds of discussions with events data experts have revealed that it is hard to establish consensus on the intensity level of several event categories due to Callahan's revision of the WEIS codes. The discussion on the intensity scores of *offers to mediate*, *negotiate*, or *peace proposal* is one example—are they intentions (+3) or desires (+2)? In other words, the Callahan scale raises conceptual challenges, which spill over to the ways in which intensity is measured. Furthermore, the event categories listed in Table B.1 hardly capture the

full range of the 63 event categories that were initially introduced by McClelland's (1978) framework. For these reasons, this project does not use Callahan's scale as its main measure.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Nevertheless, the events in the dataset used in the quantitative component of this project were coded with the Callahan scale as well as with the Goldstein scale, the latter of which is the one used in this study. Reliability tests show that both measures are significantly similar to each other (Cronbach's alpha: 0.89). The tests suggest, in other words, that the results are not driven by scale preferences.

## APPENDIX C – List of Events in the Dataset

List of events that appear in the dataset, along with their descriptions and event codes. IDEA codes come from the original King and Lowe (2003) dataset.

<i>Class</i>	<i>IDEA code</i>	<i>WEIS code</i>	<i>Event Name</i>	<i>Goldstein Score</i>
<ADIS>	1621	16	Armed force air display	-3
<AERI>	2239	22	Missile attack	-9
<AGAC>	82	8	Agree or accept	3
<AGRE>	8	8	Agree	4.8
<ALER>	161	16	Alerts	-3
<APOL>	44	4	Apologize	3.5
<ARES>	212	21	Arrest and detention	-4.4
<ASKE>	931	9	Ask for economic aid	1.6
<ASKH>	933	9	Ask for humanitarian aid	1.6
<ASKM>	93	9	Ask for material aid	3.4
<ASKP>	95	9	Request protection	3.4
<ASSA>	2232	22	Assassination	-10
<ASSR>	54	5	Assure	2.8
<ATSE>	824	8	Agree to settlement	4.8
<BANA>	1121	11	Impose restrictions	-4
<BEAT>	2221	22	Beatings	-9.6
<BFOR>	1822	18	Border fortification	-6.8
<BLAM>	121	12	Criticize or denounce	-2.2
<BLAW>	1133	11	Break law	-4
<BREL>	195	19	Break relations	-7
<BVIO>	2112	21	Armed force border violation	-6.8
<CALL>	94	9	Call for action	-0.1
<CLAR>	26	2	Acknowledge responsibility	-0.1
<CLAS>	2231	22	Armed battle	-7
<COLL>	83	8	Collaborate	4.8
<COMP>	13	13	Complain	-2.4
<CONC>	226	22	Crowd control	-9
<CONS>	3	3	Consult	1.5
<DECC>	21	21	Decline comment	-0.1
<DEFY>	113	11	Defy norms	-4
<DEII>	151	15	Demand information	-4.9
<DEMA>	15	15	Demand	-4.9
<DENY>	14	14	Deny	-1
<DERI>	159	15	Demand rights	-4.9

<i>Class</i>	<i>IDEA code</i>	<i>WEIS code</i>	<i>Event Name</i>	<i>Goldstein Score</i>
<DISC>	31	3	Discussion	1
<DMOB>	654	6	Demobilize armed forces	2.2
<DWAR>	198	19	Declare war	-4.5
<EASS>	65	6	Ease sanctions	2.9
<EEAI>	71	7	Extend economic aid	7.4
<EESB>	657	6	Ease economic sanctions	2.2
<EHAI>	73	7	Extend humanitarian aid	7.6
<EMAI>	72	7	Extend military aid	8.3
<EMPA>	43	4	Empathize	3.4
<EMSA>	658	6	Ease military blockade	2.2
<ENDO>	4	4	Endorse	3.5
<EVAC>	632	6	Evacuate victims	2.2
<EXIL>	20	20	Expel	-5
<FCOM>	132	13	Formally complain	-2.4
<FORG>	45	4	Forgive	3.5
<GASY>	631	6	Grant asylum	-1.1
<GRAN>	6	6	Grant	2.2
<GRPG>	2235	22	Artillery attack	-10
<HAID>	1932	19	Reduce or stop humanitarian assistance	-4.5
<HALO>	194	19	Halt discussions	-3.8
<HALT>	1941	19	Halt negotiation	-4.5
<HIDE>	1131	11	Political flight	-4
<HOST>	33	3	Host a meeting	2.8
<HTAK>	2132	21	Hostage taking and kidnapping	-6.8
<ICOM>	131	13	Informally complain	-2.4
<IMPR>	64	6	Improve relations	5.4
<INCC>	1613	16	Security alert	-3
<INVI>	62	6	Extend invitation	2.5
<MALT>	1611	16	Armed force alert	-3
<MDEM>	182	18	Armed force mobilization	-7.6
<MDIS>	162	16	Armed force display	-3
<MEDI>	311	3	Mediate talks	1.9
<MOCC>	2111	21	Armed force occupation	-6.8
<MONI>	214	21	Covert monitoring	-6.8
<NEGO>	312	3	Engage in negotiation	1.9
<NMFT>	175	17	Other physical force threats	-6.4
<OCOM>	24	2	Optimistic comment	0.1
<OPEN>	1132	11	Disclose information	-4
<PASS>	222	22	Physical assault	-9.6

<i>Class</i>	<i>IDEA code</i>	<i>WEIS code</i>	<i>Event Name</i>	<i>Goldstein Score</i>
<PCOM>	22	2	Pessimistic comment	-0.1
<PDEM>	181	18	Protest demonstrations	-5.2
<PEXE>	2234	22	Small arms attack	-10
<POAR>	2121	21	Political arrests	-4.4
<PRAI>	41	4	Praise	3.4
<PRME>	521	5	Promise economic support	5.2
<PRMH>	523	5	Promise humanitarian support	5.2
<PRMM>	522	5	Promise military support	5.2
<PRMS>	52	5	Promise material support	5.2
<PROM>	5	5	Promise	4.7
<PROO>	51	5	Promise policy support	4.5
<PROP>	10	10	Propose	0.8
<PTME>	104	10	Offer to mediate	0.7
<PTMN>	103	10	Offer to Negotiate	0.7
<PTRU>	101	10	Offer peace proposal	1.5
<RAID>	223	22	Armed actions	-10
<RALL>	112	11	Refuse to allow	-4
<RATI>	46	4	Ratify a decision	3.5
<REDA>	193	19	Reduce or stop aid	-5.6
<REDR>	192	19	Reduce routine activity	-2.2
<REJC>	11	11	Reject	-4
<RELE>	66	6	Release or return	1.9
<REQS>	9	9	Request	1.6
<REWD>	7	7	Reward	7.4
<RFIN>	934	9	Request an investigation	1.6
<RIOT>	224	22	Riot	-8.3
<RPMD>	1115	11	Reject proposal to meet	-4
<RPRO>	111	11	Reject proposal	-4
<RRPE>	661	6	Return, release person(s)	2.2
<RSAN>	653	6	Relax administrative sanction	2.2
<RWCF>	936	9	Request withdrawal or ceasefire	1.6
<SAID>	2	2	Comment	0.1
<SANC>	19	19	Sanction	-4.5
<SEEK>	91	9	Investigate	0.1
<SEZR>	211	21	Seize possession	-9.2
<SHEP>	63	6	Provide shelter	2.2
<SOLS>	92	9	Solicit support	3.4
<SRAL>	74	7	Rally support	7.6
<STRI>	196	19	Strikes and boycotts	-4.5

<i>Class</i>	<i>IDEA code</i>	<i>WEIS code</i>	<i>Event Name</i>	<i>Goldstein Score</i>
<THEN>	1721	17	Threaten to halt negotiations	-6
<THRT>	17	17	Threaten	-6.4
<TUNS>	171	17	Non-specific threats	-4.4
<ULTI>	174	17	Give ultimatum	-6.9
<VETO>	1123	11	Veto	-4
<VISI>	32	3	Travel to meet	1.9
<WARN>	16	16	Warn	-3
<YIEL>	1	1	Yield	1.1
<YORD>	11	1	Yield to order	0.6

Table C.1 List of Events Included in the Dataset

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