Small States and Military Operations

Why the Netherlands did Bomb in Kosovo, but not in Libya

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2. Introduction

In 1999, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) decided to intervene in Kosovo to prevent the Serbians from massacring the Albanian population. Although the conflict started in the early 1990s as Yugoslavia began to collapse - and the problems might even be traced back as far as the twelfth century - Kosovo only appeared on NATO's agenda in January 1998 (De Wijk, 2000, 23-24, 33-35, 53-54). As tensions and violence increased between the Kosovo Albanians - seeking independence - and the Serbians - who wished to keep Yugoslavia intact - NATO tried to non-forcibly coerce Serbia to back down (De Wijk, 2000, 32-35, 54). Despite NATO's threats to use force, the violence in Kosovo increased and a great humanitarian tragedy was looming. After a last attempt at negotiating a settlement in Rambouillet, the Transatlantic Alliance initiated an airstrike campaign on 24 March 1999, officially aimed at stopping the Serbians from massacring Albanians in Kosovo (De Wijk, 2000, 68, 81-82). Although the Netherlands was hardly involved in the political negotiations, its military contribution to the NATO intervention amounted to the second largest of the participating European states (De Wijk, 2000, 18-19).

Twelve years later, another humanitarian tragedy emerged in Libya, and again NATO launched an airstrike campaign. This time, however, the Netherlands decided not to contribute to the bombings. In February 2011, the wave of protests that swept through North Africa and the Middle East had reached Libya, where it was met by the Gaddafi regime with brute force (Michaels, 2014, 18-19). Incidents of mass killings and atrocities were soon reported, as the Gaddafi regime committed crimes against humanity in an attempt to remain in power (Dunne & Gelber, 2014, 334-335). On 17 March, the United Nations (UN) Security Council approved Resolution 1973, which authorized military action to protect civilians in Libya; and on 19 March a coalition of the willing initiated airstrikes against Gaddafi's troops (Michaels, 2014, 21-22). Initially, NATO only got involved to establish an arms embargo and a no-fly zone, but the realization that a no-fly zone required the elimination of Libyan air defense units got NATO involved in the airstrikes as well (Michaels, 2014, 22-23). By 31 March, NATO was in full command of the airstrike campaign, which was officially aimed at protecting the Libyan population (Michaels, 2014, 25, 27). Since the operation lacked sufficient aircraft for the ground attacks and the Netherlands had suitable aircraft at its disposal, both NATO and the United States (US) directly appealed to the Netherlands to contribute more (Michaels, 2014, 28-29). Nevertheless, the Netherlands limited its contribution to the NATO-led airstrike campaign, and only participated in non-combat operations.

In this article, a controlled comparison will be made between the Dutch decision to participate in the intervention in Kosovo in 1999 and the Dutch decision not to intervene in Libya in 2011. The military operations in Kosovo and Libya were both led by NATO. Both campaigns were limited to aerial operations only - with no 'boots on the ground'[1] - and, moreover, both campaigns were aimed at preventing civilians from being killed (De Wijk, 2000, 81-82; Michaels, 2014, 18-29). Despite these similarities, the Netherlands decided to participate in one military intervention, but not the other. By comparing these two similar cases of which only one resulted in an actual military contribution, a better understanding can be gained of why small states choose to participate in military operations. The main question this article will attempt to answer is therefore the following: *why did the Netherlands participate in the NATO-led airstrike campaign in Kosovo in 1999, but not in the NATO-led airstrikes in Libya in 2011?*

The relatively large Dutch contribution to the operation in Kosovo and the fact that the Netherlands could have supplied the aircraft that the operation in Libya lacked, indicate that the contribution of small states to multinational interventions can be meaningful. However, when a regional conflict or a civil war leads to an intervention by an international coalition, the decision to intervene is frequently explained from the perspective of the major powers, as these are usually the primary interveners (Regan, 2010, 466). And since small states cannot defend themselves - the assumption goes - their foreign policy is the result of the actions of the greater military powers (Doeser, 2011, 222-223). The Netherlands for example, joined the United States in the Korean War in the early 1950s, it took part in the US-led intervention in Iraq in the early 1990s, and recently it joined the international coalition against the Islamic State in Iraq, which was again initiated by the US (Andeweg & Irwin, 2009, 230, 232).[2] It appears as though the major powers lead, and the small states follow. This has left the foreign policy of small states as an underdeveloped field of study, and only in the last decades has it started to gain appreciation (Doeser, 2011, 222-223). The Dutch decisions regarding the interventions in Kosovo and Libya demonstrate that small states decide for themselves whether they participate in military interventions. And although some recent studies attempt to explain why small states participate in military interventions, a better understanding of small states' foreign policy could be gained by also studying the decision not to intervene.

[1] There were some ground troops deployed in Libya, who mainly armed and trained the local rebel forces. However, these units consisted of special forces that were dispatched nationally (mainly by the United Kingdom and France), and were not part of the NATO campaign (Larrabee et al., 2012, 98).

[2] "Inzet F-16's en bijna 400 militairen vanwege strijd tegen ISIS" *Ministerie van Defensie* (24 September 2014). Available at http://www.defensie.nl/actueel/nieuws/2014/09/24/inzet-f-16%E2%80%99s-en-bijna-400-militairen-vanwege-strijd-tegen-isis. [Accessed 9 May 2015].

Four theories will be applied in order to answer the question why the Netherlands contributed to the airstrike campaign in Kosovo but not in Libya. From a neorealist perspective, the decision to participate is expected to be determined by the perceived threat linked to the two conflicts. Neoliberal institutionalism explains participation as the result of the value the Netherlands - as a unitary actor - attributed to NATO as an institution. The other two theories emphasize possible domestic factors explaining participation: according to utilitarian liberalism the decision to contribute to the intervention depended on the perceived public opinion of the Dutch electorate regarding participation in the airstrike campaigns, while liberal constructivist predictions highlight the ideological backgrounds of the parties in Cabinet and the compromise they struck in the coalition agreement as determinants of military contribution. These four approaches will be covered in more detail in the theoretical section, in which the hypotheses that are to be tested are also defined. First, however, an overview will be provided of the existing literature regarding the decision-making process leading to participation in military operations.

Following the literature review and the before mentioned theoretical section, the research design, case selection and operationalization are discussed in the methods section. Here, the application of the controlled comparison is explained, and the findings are then reported in the subsequent results section. The data suggests that only the neorealist hypothesis and the second liberal constructivist hypothesis can be confirmed. This means that the main differences between the two cases are that Kosovo was perceived to pose a bigger threat than Libya, and that the 1999 coalition agreement was more supportive of Dutch participation in military operations than the coalition agreement of 2011. The causal mechanisms between these findings and the different policy outcomes are then identified in the process tracing section. The article concludes with a brief overview of the study, together with a discussion of the results.

3. Literature review

Interstate conflicts have become a rare occurrence after the Second World War, yet Western nations are still often militarily involved in distant countries. These conflicts are mainly intrastate wars, or civil wars, and the decision of foreign powers to intervene in these conflicts has been an object of study from many different perspectives. A large-N approach is frequently applied by realist scholars, attempting to find the explanatory factors of military intervention in intrastate wars in general. Renato Corbetta (2010), for example, used a large

dataset covering intervention and non-intervention in ongoing conflicts from 1946 to 2001 to study joining behavior. Building on realist and balance of power theories, he finds that the main predictors of a state joining a military intervention are military capabilities, the distance between the state and the conflict, and the ties the state has with both the state in conflict and the main intervening state (Corbetta, 2010, 75, 80). In a similar large-N study to identify the predicting factors of third state intervention, Michael Findley and Tze Kwang Teo (2006, 835) stress the importance of alliances with both the state in conflict and intervening states. Another example of large-N analyses is Patrick Regan's (1998) study on how the specific characteristics of the conflict affect the chances of a military intervention taking place. These characteristics - including the number of casualties per year, the number of refugees, the number of countries that share a border with the state in conflict, and whether the conflict occurred during the Cold War - were found to all have an effect of the likelihood of an intervention to occur (Regan, 1998, 770-771).

These large-N analyses have been used to test other theoretical approaches as well. Liberal scholars have sought to explain the participation in military interventions as the result of institutional ties, the public opinion or the ideological backgrounds of the ruling parties. Sarah Kreps (2010), for instance, studied the influence of public opinion and the institutional pressures within NATO in the decision making of the states that were involved in the NATO operations in Afghanistan. She argues that low public support for participation in these operations was outweighed in most countries by the institutional ties within NATO (Kreps, 2010, 202-203). Another example is Jürgen Schuster and Herbert Maier's (2006) study on the support of European states for the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003. They tried to identify correlations between the different policies the European states adopted on the US-led invasion on the one hand, and the public opinion regarding the invasion and the ideological background - in terms of 'left' and 'right' - of the political parties in the governments of those European countries on the other hand (Schuster & Maier, 2006, 223-224). The problem with these large-N approaches, however, is that they merely indicate the predictive value of the tested factors. They might relate geographical distance, the existence of alliances or the support for an intervention in the public opinion to the likelihood of a state to intervene, but they cannot explain how these factors actually influence the decision-making process. They do not indicate, for example, to what extent geographical distance would shape a policymaker's decision on one specific military intervention, or how much this factor would matter compared to the alternative explanations.

These limitations are to some degree reduced in single-case studies, in which a single decision to participate in a military operation is analyzed in-depth. By focusing on one case, the causal mechanisms in the decision-making process can be uncovered and the relative influence of different factors can be traced. Frequently, these studies focus on specific domestic factors that are more difficult to include in large-N approaches. One example is role theory and national role conceptions. According to this theory, introduced by Kal Holsti (1970), the conceptions of the decision makers about the roles their states fulfill can be used to explain and predict the foreign policies of those states. If the state is perceived to be a neutral state by the decision makers, non-intervention would be expected; but when it is perceived as a faithful ally it is more likely to participate in an intervention initiated by its allies. These national role conceptions can be determined by studying foreign policy statements, and one state can have several different roles at the same time (Holsti, 1970, 253-256). An example of the application of role theory is Mischa Hansel and Kai Oppermann's (2014) study of German non-participation in the military operation in Libya in 2011. They concluded that the national role conceptions of the minister of foreign affairs, in particular his beliefs on the use of military force, played a prime role in the decision not to participate in the intervention (Hansel & Oppermann, 2014, 9, 16).

However, there might not be a consensus among the policymakers on one particular role conception (Cantir & Kaarbo, 2012, 6). Klaus Brummer and Cameron Thies (2014, 18) argue that role conceptions might be different for each political party in parliament, by which they choose to connect role theory to the coalition politics approach. In the Netherlands, foreign policy is not determined by a single authority, but instead involves actors from different political parties (Andeweg & Irwin, 2009, 139, 247-248). The coalition politics approach studies how this need for internal consensus affects the foreign policy of a state. This can be done by comparing states governed by a multiparty coalition with states governed by single parties (see for example Kaarbo and Beasley, 2008), but usually involves an analysis of specific cases of foreign policy decisions, such as in George Dimitriu and Beatrice de Graaf's (2014, 17) study on the Dutch contribution to the mission in Afghanistan.

Although these examples of single-case studies offer a better insight into the causal mechanisms and the relative influence of alternative explanations, they, too, are not without limitations. Where large-N analyses struggle to explain specific cases of participation in military operations, single-case studies are often incapable of finding explanations that could be applied to other cases as well. One of the reasons for this lack of external validity is that these single-case studies are limited to instances of participation in interventions and exclude

cases of non-participation. This means that they might underestimate the factors determining non-participation - or overstate the explanations for participation (George & Bennett, 2005, 22-25). A controlled comparison of two cases that are similar in most aspects except for the dependent variable and the independent variables of interest, could alleviate this shortcoming. Comparing the Dutch participation in the Kosovo bombings with the Dutch non-participation in the Libya airstrike campaigns gives more detailed insights into the decision-making process than a large-N analysis would, while it also gives a better indication of why small states participate in military operations than a single-case study would. Furthermore, this comparison will include a multitude of theoretical approaches. Instead of testing just one or two theoretical explanations, a controlled comparison is capable of including more explanatory factors than the studies mentioned above.

4. Theoretical Section

To explain why the Netherlands did participate in the airstrike campaign in Kosovo in 1999, but not in the airstrike campaign in Libya in 2011, four theoretical approaches will be used. The first of these approaches - neorealism - is derived from the realist school, while the other three - neoliberal institutionalism, utilitarian liberalism and liberal constructivism - can be seen as part of the broader liberal research program.[3] These four approaches have been selected for this research since they include those explanations that are derived from the main theories in International Relations (Schuster & Maier, 2006, 224), and because they include factors that are particularly relevant in explaining the decision-making process in the Netherlands. An example of an explanation that has been excluded from this research is the psychological approach, which focuses on the leadership style or the personality traits of a political leader (see for example Dyson, 2006; Hermann, 2005). An approach which focuses on individuals is less relevant in the case of the Netherlands, because the Dutch political system is characterized as consensus-seeking - in which "decisions are not taken, but negotiated" (Andeweg & Irwin, 2009, 247); where the prime minister is merely a *primus inter pares*; and where "[t]here is no place for power concentrated in an individual" (Harmsen,

[3] These approaches, however, have been given different names by different scholars. The term utilitarian liberalism, for instance, is not used in *The Logic of Political Survival*, although the authors essentially describe the same phenomenon (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2003). The labels that are used here have been chosen since they relate the theoretical approaches more clearly to the broader research programs and because they are less specific than some of the alternative names that are used in other literature, which allows the approaches to include theories that are similar. Liberal constructivism, for example, includes aspects of both role theory and coalition politics theory, as these theories both expect policy decisions to depend on the ideological backgrounds of the parties in Cabinet.

1999, 93). Thus, the approaches that are used do not include all possible explanations of foreign policy decisions, but they do cover the most influential and the most relevant explanations for Dutch participation in military interventions.

4.1 Neorealism

One of the factors that is traditionally expected to explain participation in military interventions is the nature of the conflict in which the intervention will take place. The characteristics of the conflict itself, such as its severity, the region in which it occurs or the actors that are involved, could be expected to influence the decision to participate in a military intervention. The theory that explains decision making regarding military intervention as the result of the specific conflict in which it would take place, is neorealism. By viewing states as self-interested actors (Andreatta, 2011, 27), neorealism predicts the decision to participate in an intervention to depend on how the conflict is perceived. The more a conflict is perceived to be damaging the intervening state's national interest, the more likely the state is to decide to intervene.

The neorealist approach assumes that the international arena is shaped by states as the dominant actors, with no existence of a higher authority than the state (Andreatta, 2011, 27). This means that the international arena is anarchical, in which each state has to fend for itself in order to survive. As a result, states - which are considered to be unitary, rational and self-interested actors - are inclined to mistrust each other and to consider other states as potential security threats (Andreatta, 2011, 27). In light of these assumptions, it seems as though neorealism might struggle to explain participation in the airstrike campaigns in Kosovo and Libya, as both operations were led by an interstate alliance. Although alliances seem to be contradictory to the concepts of anarchy and mistrust, neorealism has an explanation for their existence as well. The main purpose for a state to commit to a military alliance, such as NATO, is to improve its position vis-à-vis a security threat (Walt, 2009, 86). During the Cold War, NATO served to balance against the Soviet Union and the commitment to this military alliance strengthened a state's security position.

As the Cold War ended, however, commitment to NATO could no longer be explained solely by the protection it provided against the Soviet threat. Instead, commitment to NATO after the Cold War is explained by neorealist theory as an act of bandwagoning, in which weaker states use the hegemony of the US to their own benefit - and the US uses its hegemonic position to influence the policies of weaker states (Waltz, 2000, 25-26). Although this reasoning explains the persistence of NATO after the collapse of the Soviet Union, it

struggles to account for why the Netherlands did participate in the NATO-led airstrike campaign in Kosovo, while in Libya it supported the operation but refused to use force. The hegemonic power position of the US might explain the NATO-membership of the Netherlands, but it cannot explain why a NATO member state would selectively contribute to NATO-led interventions. To explain these different decisions, neorealism looks at the characteristics of the conflict itself.

As neorealism assumes that states are rational, unitary actors who seek to further their self-interest, the approach relates the decision to intervene in a conflict to the effects the conflict has for the state's national interest. These interests are predominantly limited to security considerations, as the state's basic motive is survival (Mearsheimer, 1994-95, 10). While the Soviet Union was the main security threat that influenced a state's commitment to NATO during the Cold War, the security considerations that, according to neorealism, determine a state's participation in interventions during the post-Cold War era stem from the conflicts themselves. In other words, the reaction of a state to a specific conflict is determined by the degree at which that conflict is considered to be damaging to the national security. If the conflict poses no threat at all, the response is more likely to be of a diplomatic nature or even non-existent; while military action is more likely to be the response to a larger security threat. According to this logic, the perceived national security threat is thus expected to have been higher in the case of Kosovo in 1999 than in the case of Libya in 2011. Hypothesis 1 is: *the Dutch government perceived the conflict in Kosovo in 1999 to be a bigger threat to its national security than the conflict in Libya in 2011*.

4.2 Neoliberal Institutionalism

Where neorealism views alliances as ad hoc means for states to respond to security threats, it is also possible to conceive alliances - particularly long lasting ones such as NATO - as being more than just defensive pacts. According to neoliberal institutionalism, alliances are institutions whose effects are not merely limited to security considerations, as they also reduce the transaction costs - i.e. the time and effort it would take to create and maintain any agreement - between the participating actors (Keohane, 1988, 386). In practice, this means that NATO-membership not only provides security against external threats, but it also improves the conditions for further cooperation with fellow member states. Therefore, the neoliberal institutionalist approach explains the response of the Netherlands to the conflicts in Kosovo and Libya, not in light of their effects on the Dutch national security as the neorealist

approach does, but instead in light of the institutional context in which the response would take place.

The basic assumptions of neoliberal institutionalism are similar to those of neorealism: the approach assumes that international politics is dominated by states, which are unitary, rational actors that seek to further their self-interest, and that the international arena is anarchical - with no higher authority than the state (Hellmann & Wolf, 1993, 7). The main difference between the two approaches, however, is that according to neorealism, cooperation between states is hindered by the absence of a higher authority and also by the assumption that states value relative gains over absolute gains - which means that states would prefer not to cooperate and gain nothing, over a cooperation in which the state gains less than its partner - while neoliberal institutionalism assumes that states value absolute gains over relative gains and that cooperation can be established through institutions (Hellmann & Wolf, 1993, 7-8). Although the lack of a higher authority means that states are free to cheat and deceive others, and that states can thus not be certain that other states will live up to their promises, the neoliberal institutionalist approach argues that cooperation is still possible by reducing uncertainties through institutions. Institutions increase the costs of defecting from agreements, which reduces the risk of being cheated (Keohane, 1988, 386). The costs of the commitment to an institution are rewarded by the trust it creates with the other participating states. This self-interest is what drives states to create institutions, which only persist "as long as, but only so long as, their members have incentives to maintain them" (Keohane, 1988, 387).

From this neoliberal institutionalist perspective, the participation in NATO-led interventions should be seen as a state's commitment to an international institution. As states are rational actors, they should only be expected to create institutions when the anticipated benefits of the commitment - be they long term or short term - outweigh the costs (Keohane, 1988, 387). The Dutch decision of whether or not to contribute to NATO-led airstrike campaigns is thus expected to depend on the perceived value of NATO for the Netherlands. This 'value' amounts to the gains it provides for the national security, as perceived by the Netherlands as a unitary actor. The assessment of this perceived value also includes other benefits, such as improved economic relations with other NATO-member states or the higher status that NATO can provide in international affairs. Moreover, as neoliberal institutionalism argues that states are the dominant actors in the international arena, their commitment to an institution is determined by the states themselves: states are able to reevaluate or reconsider their commitment to an institution at any time. Although commitment to an institution restrains a state's freedom of action - which helps creating the reputation of being a reliable

partner - a rational actor would only submit to such restrictions when "substantial common interests" can be realized (Keohane, 2005, 117, 258-259). A change in the anticipated benefits could thus lead to a change in the state's commitment. Therefore, the Dutch decision to participate in the airstrikes in Kosovo but not in the bombings in Libya would be the result of a decline in the anticipated benefits of the commitment to NATO as an institution. Hypothesis 2 is: *the Dutch government perceived NATO to be a more valuable institution for the Netherlands in 1999 than it did in 2011*.

4.3 Utilitarian Liberalism

Instead of expecting a state's contribution to military interventions to be the consequence of external variables, it is also possible to explain the participation in interventions as the result of domestic factors. The state is then not conceived as a unitary actor, but instead the internal structure and dynamics of the state are believed to influence the decision making as well. Utilitarian liberalism argues that the decision to contribute to military interventions depends on the conditions within the Netherlands itself. As politicians presumably wish to remain in power, they avoid making decisions that could cost them their position (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2003, 8-9). Therefore, the policy outcomes are explained by utilitarian liberalism as the result of the influence of the public opinion.

This logic is closely related to rational choice theory, as it argues that policymakers are utility-maximizing - or rational - individuals who seek to gain the most by spending the least (Freund & Rittberger, 2001, 69-70). Utilitarian liberalism assumes that the policymakers' primary interest is political survival, since they first need to be in office to then be able to pursue any other goal (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2003, 7). For political survival, the policymaker relies on a winning coalition in the 'selectorate'; in other words, of all those that are involved in the appointment of his office, the policymaker needs a majority to choose for him (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2003, 7-8). In a nondemocratic state, the selectorate might consist of only a small political, economic or religious elite, and the policymaker would thus try to please the limited group of people that forms his winning coalition. In a democratic state, however, the selectorate consists of the entire electorate, which means that the winning coalition, that allows the policymaker to stay in office, consists of a large segment of society (Mattes et al., 2014, 3). In order to remain in power, the Dutch ministers thus need a majority of the electorate to vote for the coalition parties.[4]

[4] This is not the only requirement to remain minister in the Netherlands: the new Cabinet that is formed should again include the political party of the former minister and it is also not certain that the former minister will be

As a result, the policymaker will choose the policy alternative that he believes is most appealing to the preferences of the electorate. Going against the will of the people (or at least a clear majority of the people) would reduce the likelihood of remaining in power. This should especially be the case when these policy options have a high public saliency, as in the case of military operations (Schuster & Maier, 2006, 228). The impact of the public opinion on the decision-making process can also be expected to be influenced by upcoming elections. However, the operations in Kosovo and Libya both occurred within the first year after parliamentary elections took place. Accordingly, utilitarian liberalism explains the Dutch contribution to the NATO airstrikes in Kosovo as the result of the perceived public support for these operations, while the restricted participation in the Libya-campaign would have been caused by low public support - or high public resistance. Hypothesis 3 is: *Dutch policymakers perceived that the Dutch public opinion was more supportive of participation in the airstrike campaign in Kosovo in 1999, than of participation in the airstrike campaign in Libya in 2011.*

4.4 Liberal constructivism

Utilitarian liberalism is not the only theoretical approach that explains decision making as the result of the policymakers' preferences. Instead of assuming that policymakers are utility-maximizing individuals, it is also possible to conceive of them as driven by personal ideas and convictions. The difference between utilitarian liberalism and liberal constructivism lies in their explanation of why a policymaker chooses a certain policy alternative. Liberal constructivism is the theoretical approach that assumes that an individual's or a group's ideas, beliefs, norms and culture, define their preferences (Schuster & Maier, 2006, 230-231). Policymakers are thus expected to not automatically choose the policy option that maximizes utility, but instead choose the option that is most consistent with their personal worldviews. For example, this can take the shape of religious objections against military operations or of an ideological conviction that states have a responsibility to protect civilians. It also includes the policymakers' conceptions of the roles their state fulfills in the international arena, as defined in Holsti's (1970) role theory.

In the Netherlands, however, foreign policy is not determined by a single authority, but it is rather the outcome of a compromise between the different parties in Cabinet (Kaarbo,

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re-appointed as minister in this new Cabinet (Andeweg & Irwin, 2009, 126-131). For instance, Kok II (the Cabinet led by Wim Kok from 1998 to 2002) only included 6 out of the 14 minister of Kok I (1994-1998) and only 3 of those ministers were appointed to the same ministry as in the previous Cabinet. However, to be reassigned as minister, and for the new Cabinet to again include the minister's political party, it is necessary for the coalition parties to gain a majority of the votes in the parliamentary elections in the first place. Winning the elections is always the first step to remain in power.

2012, 77-78). Instead of looking at the worldviews of each individual policymaker, it is thus possible to look at the convictions of the political party they belong to. Since the 1960s, the appointment of ministers and junior ministers in the Netherlands has become more partisan, as their selection is increasingly based on political experience rather than on technical expertise (Andeweg & Irwin, 2009, 142). Moreover, prior to the weekly Cabinet meetings, the ministers have to attend party meetings in order to reinforce party discipline (Andeweg & Irwin, 2009, 143-144). The policymakers can therefore be expected to act in accordance with the worldviews of their political parties. According to liberal constructivism, the preferred policy option in the Netherlands is thus expected to rely on the ideological background of the parties in power. Hypothesis 4 is: *the parties in Cabinet in 2011 were more ideologically opposed to Dutch participation in an airstrike campaign than the parties in Cabinet in 1999.*

However, no single party has ever reached a majority in parliamentary elections in the Netherlands, which means that the Dutch government is always shaped by multiparty coalitions (Andeweg & Irwin, 2009, 125). The need for the political parties in the Cabinet to compromise, leads to policy outcomes that do not always match the parties' initial preferences. This links liberal constructivism to the coalition politics approach, which assumes that the foreign policy of multiparty governments differs from that of single-party governments (Kaarbo & Beasley, 2008, 68). Each party in Cabinet has its own perspective on the relative importance of security threats, institutional ties, or the public opinion; which means that these factors might still influence the decision making, but the policy outcome is determined by how the parties in Cabinet agree to respond to them (Kaarbo, 2012, 5-6). When a coalition is formed in the Netherlands, the participating parties settle on a coalition agreement (or *regeerakkoord*) in which they bind themselves - and, more importantly, the other parties - to the compromise that has been struck. These coalition agreements cover all the issues the parties disagree on in detail, and they act like a "political contract that holds the coalition together" (Andeweg & Irwin, 2009, 129). The decision whether to contribute to NATO-led airstrikes should thus not only be expected to depend on the coalition parties' ideological stance towards such actions, but also on the compromise they were able to reach. Hypothesis 5 is: *the coalition agreement of the Dutch Cabinet in 2011 was less supportive of participation in an airstrike campaign than the coalition agreement of the Cabinet in 1999.*

5. Methods

To find out which factors influenced the decision making in the two cases, a combination of the controlled comparison and the process tracing methods will be used. The most similar system design allows for a comparison that approaches an experimental setting. This study remains an exercise of social science, however, which inherently means that any two cases might not be similar enough to provide a strong test of the theories (Van Evera, 1997, 57-58). The controlled comparison method will therefore be combined with process tracing. Although process tracing provides a stronger test of the theories' explanatory power, it also requires more detailed information. In the case of decision making regarding the use of the military, such information might not be directly available. Relying solely on process tracing to study the causal mechanisms in the decision making might thus not be feasible. Instead, the controlled comparison method will allow for the identification of the factors that differed between the two cases. Using the process tracing method will then allow to link these factors to the decision making, by specifying the causal mechanisms between them.

5.1 Case selection

To identify the factors that drive small states to participate in military operations, two cases of Dutch decision making regarding the contribution to airstrike campaigns have been selected. By focusing on just these two cases, it is possible to study the relative influence of multiple factors in the decision-making process, instead of merely looking at the presence of a single factor in a large number of cases. Such a two-case comparison is possible when the cases are similar in many aspects, yet differ on the dependent variable and a limited number of independent variables of interest. This makes the comparison of one state across two points in time an attractive option, since a comparison of two different states would have to account for a larger number of differences - e.g. cultural, historical or geographical differences.

Furthermore, the military operations should also be similar in order to be compared. Comparing, for instance, a small state's (non-)participation in the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 to its contribution to a United Nations-led peacekeeping operation in Africa would involve too many changing variables to give any meaningful insight into the decision-making process. This problem is limited in the cases of Kosovo and Libya, since they share some basic characteristics. Both operations took place within the same institutional context, as both were led by NATO, and both operations were limited to aerial operations without involving 'boots on the ground'. Furthermore, both operations were aimed at preventing the killing of

civilians (De Wijk, 2000, 81-82; Michaels, 2014, 18-29). Nevertheless, the Netherlands participated in the bombings in Kosovo, but not in Libya.

Although there are some important differences between the two cases, this should not necessarily hamper the comparison. It can be argued that the decision making leading to the participation in the campaigns in Kosovo and Libya were influenced by the preceding military operations the Netherlands had contributed to. The UN-led and NATO-led operations in the former Yugoslavia that preceded the airstrike campaigns in Kosovo - especially UNPROFOR (United Nations Protection Force) in which Dutch peacekeepers failed to prevent the massacre of some 7,000 Muslim men in Srebrenica in 1995 (Power, 2002, 391-392) - could have affected the Dutch decision to contribute to the operation in Kosovo. By contrast, the airstrike campaign in Libya was preceded by the 'War on Terror', which had become both unpopular and controversial in the Netherlands (Dimitriu & De Graaf, 2014, 7). The argument would then be that the airstrike campaign in Kosovo was used by the Netherlands to make up for the events in the former Yugoslavia, while the Netherlands did not participate in the airstrike campaign in Libya because of the negative experiences of the War on Terror. To compare these two cases would thus be meaningless, as the situational factors determined the outcome of the decision-making process from the outset. Against this reasoning, however, three counterarguments can be made.

First, the argument that the Netherlands wanted to make up for past mistakes in Bosnia, and tried to prevent future atrocities at all costs, could equally apply to the Libyan case as well, as that operation was also aimed at preventing the killing of civilians. Second, the atrocities in Srebrenica could also be seen as a reason for the Netherlands to not be so eager to get involved in another military operation. Especially since the NATO-led campaigns in Kosovo were not based on a UN Security Council resolution, which made their legality "highly disputed" (Krieger, 2001, xxxiv). The operations in Libya, on the other hand, did have a sound legal basis through the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973 (Michaels, 2014, 21). Thus, participation in the disputed actions in Kosovo would not necessarily have been more sensible than a contribution to the authorized bombings in Libya. And third, the negative experiences of the War on Terror did not prevent the Netherlands to participate in the airstrike campaigns in Iraq against the Islamic State in 2014, merely three years after the Libya case. Apparently, the legacy of the War on Terror by itself, cannot explain non-participation.

Together, these arguments indicate that the situational factors were not that much different in the two cases. This is not to say that there are no dissimilarities, but rather that

these dissimilarities do not hamper their comparison for this research. It is because of the similarities between the two cases that the comparison of the different policy outcomes could provide new insights into the motivations of small states to participate in military operations. It allows for the variables of interest to be isolated, while possible intervening or competing variables are held constant.

5.2 Operationalization

5.2.1 Neorealism

According to the neorealist approach, the decisions whether or not to participate in the airstrike campaigns in Kosovo and Libya, depended on the perceived threat these conflicts posed to the Dutch national security. The focus of classical realism on states as unitary actors would suggest to measure the material capabilities and geographical proximity of Yugoslavia and Libya, to determine the threat they posed to the Netherlands. However, the NATO-led operations took place in intrastate conflicts in both countries, and were not aimed at preventing a possible interstate war between the Netherlands and Yugoslavia or Libya. Therefore, the perceived threat that will be measured for the first hypothesis, will instead consist of the indirect consequences of the conflicts for the Dutch national interests. The more the national interests, such as vital natural resources or key trade routes, were perceived to be at stake, the more the conflict was perceived to be threatening to the Netherlands. In order to determine these perceived national security threats, two measurements will be used.

First, the perceived threat level can be derived from expressions of the policymakers themselves (Cohen, 1978, 95).[5] In the Netherlands, the ministers need to keep the parliament informed, in order to secure the parliament's vote of confidence (Andeweg & Irwin, 2009, 153, 155). When the policymakers inform the parliament about the conflict in Kosovo or Libya, they explain why it is necessary for the parliament to be aware of the situation in these foreign countries. By comparing the ways in which the Kosovo conflict and the Libya conflict were described by the ministers to the parliament, it is possible to determine which conflict was perceived to pose a bigger threat to the national security. This is done by comparing the information that was provided through ministerial letters (or *kamerbrieven*), parliamentary debates, and so-called VAOs (*Verslag Algemeen Overleg*) - in which meetings of the

[5] Although the neorealist approach assumes states to be unitary actors, it can still be meaningful to look at the expressions of individual policymakers. When the state is seen as a unitary actor, this does not mean that the individual policymakers are irrelevant; instead it means that it does not matter who the policymakers are, as the state is central in international politics and each rational policymaker would come to the same conclusions given the circumstances (Heywood, 2011, 115).

parliamentary committee on foreign policy are discussed in parliament (Andeweg & Irwin, 2009, 150-151, 155).[6] These parliamentary documents can then be categorized in terms of the aspects of the conflict they focused on.

By differentiating the concerns that are expressed by the policymakers, the parliamentary documents can be divided into three categories: (1) humanitarian, (2) regional stability and (3) national interests. The first category is the one where the national security threat is perceived to be the lowest. It consists of the parliamentary documents in which the policymakers focus on the humanitarian situation or the violation of human rights in the conflict area. Although these aspects of a conflict can certainly be troublesome, they do not directly affect the Dutch national interest. The second category contains concerns of an escalation of the conflict. Here, the conflict is still not perceived as directly affecting the national interest, but the risk of spillover to neighboring countries gives it the potential to become a larger threat to the national security - e.g. it might spillover to states that are considered to be more powerful or more dangerous. The third category amounts to the highest perceived threat, as it consists of concerns about the national interest directly being at stake.

For the conflicts in Kosovo and Libya, each ministerial letter, parliamentary debate and VAO can be assigned to one or multiple of the categories - as multiple concerns can be expressed in one letter or debate. The resulting distributions of the parliamentary documents across the three categories can then be used to determine the perceived threat level of the conflicts. As the possibilities of different distributions is limited, they can be objectively separated into three classifications where the perceived threat is considered to be at a low, medium, or high level. This is done using the 'average' way in which the conflicts were described (for a detailed explanation see Appendix A). A low level of perceived threat is ascribed to the distributions that are the most skewed towards humanitarian concerns, while the distributions that are the most skewed towards national interests concerns indicate a high level of perceived threat. Although this classification is not necessarily required to determine which of the two conflicts was perceived as more threatening than the other, it does enable the results of this measurement to be combined with the results of the second measurement.

The second way of measuring how threatening the two conflicts were perceived to be, is through the annual reports of the Dutch general intelligence and military intelligence

[6] All of these parliamentary documents are publicly accessible at https://www.overheid.nl/.

agencies, the AIVD and MIVD (previously the BVD and MID).[7] These agencies gather information on potential or actual security threats, to improve the capabilities of the policymakers to protect the state and its citizens. Although much of the intelligence agencies' activities remain classified, their annual reports provide an overview of the focal points of their activities and of the recent developments that pose a threat to the Dutch society (Binnenlandse Veiligheidsdienst, 1999, 3). By analyzing the annual reports from the year in which the conflicts in Kosovo and Libya started, up until the year in which the airstrike campaigns commenced, an assessment can be made of how threatening these events were considered to be by the intelligence agencies. And, since the agencies' findings were reported to the policymakers at the time, this also gives an indirect indication of the policymakers' perceptions of the conflicts.

Unfortunately, the reports do not rank the security threats in order of magnitude, nor do they assign threat-levels to each conflict situation. To nevertheless be able to compare the perceived threat for different conflicts, two separate indicators can be used. First, the portion of the report that is dedicated to the conflict in Kosovo or Libya - in terms of the number of words as a percentage of the words in total - gives an indication of the threat-level of the conflict. The annual reports cover a variety of security issues - including global terrorism, migration and refugee flows, and organized crime within the Netherlands, to name but a few - and for each issue the main points of concern and the main sources of the threat are listed. Therefore, the more a single conflict or country is mentioned in the report and the larger the portion of the report that is devoted to that specific conflict or country, the more attention it had been given by the intelligence agencies. When the percentage is below 3.33 per cent the perceived threat will be considered to be at a low level, and when it is above 6.66 per cent it will be considered to be at a high level.[8] Comparing the weight of the reports that are dedicated to the two conflicts is thus one indication of which conflict was perceived to be a bigger threat to the Netherlands.

The second way of determining the threat-level of the conflicts from the annual reports, is by looking at the number of different potential consequences the conflicts could have for the Netherlands. For example, during the Kosovo conflict, the AIVD reported that

[7] These abbreviations stand for *Algemene Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsdienst*, *Militaire Inlichtingen en- Veiligheidsdienst*, *Binnenlandse Veiligheidsdienst* and *Militaire Inlichtingendienst* respectively. For the sake of simplicity, from here on these will only be referred to by their current names: AIVD and MIVD.

[8] As the reports cover a large variety of topics, it is highly unlikely that more than 10 per cent of the words are devoted to any one subject. When the percentages below 10 are then divided into three ranges, this results in a classification of a low perceived threat when the percentage is below 3.33%, and a high perceived threat when the percentage is above 6.66%. Any percentage between these boundaries will be considered to be a medium perceived threat.

Albanian minorities were recruiting fighters in the Netherlands, which can be considered as one possible consequence of the conflict. The information about bomb threats that were received counts as another one (Binnenlandse Veiligheidsdienst, 1999, 23). However, each report varies in layout and structure, which means that one report might speak of 'multiple incidents of violence' where another addresses each incident individually. Therefore, when different reports mention the same consequence for one conflict, or when one consequence is mentioned multiple times within one report, it only counts once. The larger the number of different consequences that are listed, the higher the threat-level was perceived to be. With less than five consequences, the perceived threat will be considered to be at a low level, and with ten or more consequences it will be considered to be at a high level.[9]

A possible third indicator would have been the wording used to describe these consequences. However, the reports are all written in a rather neutral manner, in which observations are presented as facts and superlatives are rarely used. The slight differences in wording that do exist would result in a categorization that is too subjective to base any meaningful conclusions on. Furthermore, a categorization of the nature of the consequences - similar to how the concerns that are expressed in the parliamentary documents are categorized - would not improve the analysis of the annual reports, because the intelligence agencies only focus on matters that affect the national interests.

Finally, the assessment of the policymakers' expressions in the parliamentary documents can be combined with the analysis of the annual reports of the intelligence agencies, to determine to what extent the perceived threat level differed in the two cases. Individually, each indicator will point out one conflict to have been perceived as more threatening than the other. However, since the three separate indicators classify the perceived threat of a conflict as being at a low, a medium or a high level, the combination of these three indicators determines how much different the perceived threat was for the two conflicts. The more of the three indicators point in different directions, and the further the distance between those directions - e.g. low versus high instead of low versus medium - the more the threat of the two conflicts were perceived to be different.

[9] A conflict does not need to have any direct consequences to be mentioned in the annual reports, while ten or more different consequences is exceptional. If 10 or more consequences is then classified as a 'high' perceived threat, then 5 would divide the rest into equal groups, with 0-4 classified as 'low' and 5-9 classified as 'medium'.

5.2.2 Neoliberal institutionalism

The neoliberal institutionalist approach expects a state's commitment to an institution to depend on the anticipated benefits of that institution for the state. The Dutch decision whether or not to contribute to NATO-led airstrike campaigns is thus expected to depend on the perceived value of NATO for the Netherlands. This 'value' amounts to the gains it provides for the national security, as perceived by the Netherlands as a unitary actor, and it also includes expected benefits in terms of economic relations with other member states or a higher status in the international arena. Comparing the perceived value of NATO in 1999 with the perceived value in 2011, can be done by examining the way the Dutch government evaluated NATO in its long-term policy plans. With NATO being a military alliance, its importance for the Netherlands is expressed in the *defensienota*: the long-term defense policy, or Grand Strategy, of the Netherlands. An analysis of these security strategies will provide the data to compare the perceived value of NATO for the Netherlands in 1999 and 2011.

Although each government makes its own 'short-term' defense policy about the available budget and the way the budget is distributed among the armed forces, the Grand Strategy covers the overarching objectives of the military and how these should be achieved. These long-term defense policies are occasionally amended, but they are only renewed roughly every decade (the last four are from 1984, 1991, 2000 and 2013). The security strategy of 1991, for example, aimed to "radically revise" the Dutch defense policy in response to the circumstances of the post-Cold War era - in which the need for a large defensive force had declined (*Defensienota 1991*, 1990-91, 5). The security strategy is thus not limited to the restructuring of the Dutch armed forces and to the planned cuts in defense expenditure; it also includes the Dutch policy towards international cooperation and an assessment of the expected necessity of multinational defense collaborations for the Netherlands.

These are the sections of the *defensienota* that will be analyzed to determine the value that is attributed to NATO. This can not only be done by comparing how they describe the importance of NATO in the security strategy, but also how NATO is addressed in relation to other forms of defense cooperation - such as the European Union (EU) or bilateral cooperation. The more NATO is described as an exceptionally important organization - instead of as 'just' being important - and the more the alternative organizations are described as subordinate to NATO, the higher the perceived value of NATO will be classified to be. Furthermore, if NATO was involved in the formation of the security strategy, then the perceived value is considered to have also been higher than when this was not the case.

The new security strategy that was set out in the *Defensienota 1991* - together with the additions of the 'priority document' of 1993 (the *Prioriteitennota 1993*) - remained in force until 2000, when it was replaced with the cleverly named *Defensienota 2000*. This renewed strategy was aimed to prepare the armed forces for the challenges of the twenty-first century (*Defensienota 2000*, 1999-2000, 18). Two main amendments were made to it in 2003 and 2006 - with the *Prinsjesdagbrief 2003* and the *Actualiseringsbrief 2006* - and they remained in force until 2013. The Kosovo case will thus include the Grand Strategy set out in the *Defensienota 1991* and the *Prioriteitennota 1993*, while the Libyan case will include the *Defensienota 2000*, the *Prinsjesdagbrief 2003* and the *Actualiseringsbrief 2006*. All of these long-term defense policies are publicly accessible on government websites.[10]

5.2.3 Utilitarian liberalism

The main assumption of utilitarian liberalism is that a policymaker's primary interest is political survival - or, translated to a democratic context, re-election (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2003, 7-8). Therefore, policymakers choose the policy alternatives that they believe to be the most appealing to the electorate. The decisions to participate in the airstrike campaigns in Kosovo and Libya are expected to depend on the public opinion regarding these operations, as perceived by the policymakers. This 'perceived public opinion' will be measured in two ways. First, the actual public opinion can be derived from existing datasets. The public support for Dutch participation in the airstrike campaign in Kosovo will be derived from Philip Everts and Pierangelo Isernia's (2001) book on the role of public opinion in the international use of force - which includes the case of Kosovo and the public opinion in the Netherlands. The data for the Libyan case will be derived from the German Marshall Fund's (GMF) Transatlantic Trends 2011.

As the theoretical expectation is that the policymakers' perceptions of the public support determined their decision, the best indicator would be opinion polls that were conducted and published shortly before the decision was made. This would make it more likely that the public support that was measured by the opinion polls, is similar to what the policymakers perceived the public support to be at the time of the decision making. Unfortunately, the data for both Kosovo and Libya are from opinion polls that were conducted in the months after the decision whether to participate in the bombings had been made (and

[10] For *Defensienota 1991* and *Prioriteitennota 1993* see http://www.statengeneraaldigitaal.nl/. For *Defensienota 2000* see https://www.overheid.nl/. For *Prinsjesdagbrief 2003* and *Actualiseringsbrief 2006* see http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/.

for Kosovo there is also a poll that was conducted four months prior to the bombings). There is no way to completely resolve this shortcoming, but the validity of the comparison can be improved by using a threshold in the opinion poll data similar to the one used by Schuster and Maier (2006, 229). The public support between 40 and 60 per cent will be interpreted as 'neutral', and only below 40 per cent and above 60 per cent will the public opinion be interpreted as being 'opposing' or 'in favor' respectively. This prevents slight changes in the public opinion, between the time of the decision making and the time of the opinion polls, from altering the outcome of the comparison completely.[11] As a result, the likelihood that the measurements of the public opinion differ from the policymakers' perceptions of the public opinion is decreased.

The second measurement will concentrate on the actual expressions of the policymakers' perceptions. Parliamentary debates and ministerial letters regarding the decisions can be analyzed to uncover the policymakers' perceptions of the public opinion on participation in the airstrikes. If the public opinion played a role in the decision making, then the policymakers could have mentioned it to support their decisions in the run-up or shortly after these decisions were made. Together with the data of the actual public opinion, this will allow for the policymakers' perceptions of the public opinion to be classified as (1) supportive, (2) somewhat supportive, (3) neutral, (4) somewhat opposed or (5) opposed in regards to participation in the airstrike campaigns. When both the actual public opinion and the expressions of the policymakers point in the same direction - e.g. that the public was in favor of participation - then the resulting 'perceived public opinion' is classified as more supportive (or opposed) than when only one of the two indicators point in that direction (for a detailed explanation see Appendix B).

An alternative indicator of the perceived public support could have been an analysis of the Dutch media coverage of the two conflicts and whether the mainstream newspapers were opposed or supportive of Dutch participation. Although this indicator would have been available to the policymakers at the time of the decision making, it does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the electorate - while that is the essential factor in the utilitarian liberalist explanation. Moreover, the media coverage would not indicate how the public opinion was perceived by the policymakers themselves. A combination of opinion polls and expressions of

[11] Using these thresholds, the public opinion must have changed by at least 22 percentage points (from 61 per cent to 39 per cent) to be interpreted as in favor of participation, while it actually was opposed at the time of the decision making. Without the thresholds, this could be the result of much smaller changes in the public support - for instance from 51 per cent to 49 per cent in favor. Simultaneously, it helps the cross-case comparison as a 51 per cent support will not be interpreted as equally in favor as a support of 61 per cent.

policymakers will therefore be a more reliable way of assessing the policymakers' perceptions of the public opinion.

5.2.4 Liberal constructivism

To evaluate the explanations of the liberal constructivist approach, two hypotheses have been derived. The approach assumes that policymakers choose the policy alternative that is most consistent with their worldview or ideological background. Since Dutch foreign policy is often the result of a compromise between the multiple parties in Cabinet (Kaarbo, 2012, 77-78), both the ideological background of these parties and the coalition agreement they settled on are expected to determine the decisions whether to contribute to the airstrike campaigns.

Whether and to what extent the parties in government were ideologically opposed to the bombings, for the fourth hypothesis, can be derived from the manifestoes of those parties. Before parliamentary elections, each party publishes a new manifesto in which they express their ideas about nearly all possible issues (Andeweg & Irwin, 2009, 92). Statements on military interventions, their utility and whether the Netherlands should be willing and able to participate in them, can thus be used to determine which parties were more opposed to Dutch participation in NATO-led airstrike campaigns. During the Kosovo conflict, the most recent manifestoes were from the 1998 elections, and during the Libya conflict the manifestoes dated back to the 2010 elections. All manifestoes can be found in an open-access database of the University of Groningen.[12] The size of the parties (in seats in parliament) and the number of parties in Cabinet, indicate the relative impact of the ideological backgrounds. This is used to determine which Cabinet should be considered to be more opposed to participation in military operations.

For the fifth hypothesis, the compromise between the governing parties with regards to the participation in airstrike campaigns or other multinational military operations can be derived from the coalition agreements (or *regeerakkoorden*). The problem of analyzing these coalition agreements is that they might not include all the possible compromises that the parties in Cabinet struck, and that the parties might reach new informal accords after the official agreement has been published. An alternative measurement would be to analyze the compromises that are struck in the Council of Ministers - i.e. the weekly meeting of all the ministers of the Cabinet - however, the minutes of these meetings are kept secret for twenty years, which makes them inaccessible for the cases of Kosovo and Libya. The coalition

[12] *Documentatiecentrum Nederlandse Politieke Partijen* (DNPP). Available at http://dnpp.ub.rug.nl/dnpp/.

agreement will therefore be used as the embodiment of the compromises between the parties in Cabinet. During the conflict in Kosovo, the ruling Cabinet was Kok II, which started in 1998, and during the conflict in Libya it was Rutte I, which started in 2010. Both coalition agreements are publicly accessible.[13]

The coalition agreements, however, might not specifically mention whether the Netherlands should participate in military operations or which preconditions must be met for the Netherlands to contribute. Therefore, the stance towards participation that the coalition parties agreed upon, can also be derived from the statements in the coalition agreement on what the military should be focused on. Statements that the armed forces will be more focused on defending the homeland, indicates a less supportive stance regarding participation in international military operations than statements that the armed forces should be focused on protecting civilians around the globe. And when a Cabinet agrees to reduce the number of international operations that the armed forces should be capable of contributing to at any time, this would also indicate a more opposed stance towards participation in international military actions. If the agreement does not mention the military whatsoever, this would indicate a neutral stance; where the Cabinet has no ideological opposition to Dutch participation in military operations, nor a belief that the Netherlands should be actively involved in military missions. A complicating factor, however, is the fact that the 2010 coalition consisted of a minority government, with two separate agreements. Roughly speaking, one coalition agreement focused on internal affairs and the other on foreign affairs, thus the former will be excluded in this research.

6. Results

6.1 Neorealism

The first hypothesis is the neorealist expectation that the decision to participate in an airstrike campaign depends on the threat the conflict poses for the national security. The more a foreign conflict is perceived as threatening for a state's national security, the more likely that state is to take drastic measures to reduce that security threat. When the national interests are not at stake, a state would prefer not to get involved due to the costs and risks of military action (Mearsheimer, 1994-95, 29). Two measurements will be used to compare the perceived threat of the conflicts in Kosovo and Libya. The resulting indications of which conflict was

[13] For the 1998 agreement, see http://www.rijksbegroting.nl/rijksbegrotingsarchief/regeerakkoorden/regeerakkoord_1998.pdf. For the 2010 agreement, see http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten-en-publicaties/rapporten/2010/09/30/regeerakkoord-vvd-cda.html.

perceived as more threatening, will then be combined to give an assessment of the extent to which the perceptions differed.

First, the threat perceptions will be derived from the information the policymakers provided to the parliament. The measurement includes the letters and debates that were devoted to the conflicts in Kosovo and Libya from the moment the conflicts started, to the moment the NATO-led airstrikes began. The last document that is included, is thus the letter or debate in which the decision to participate in the bombings - or not to participate - has been made and is explained to the parliament by the government. Any document in which the parliament is informed about the conflicts after the bombings had already started is excluded, since the perceptions of threat that are expressed in these documents - which had likely changed due to the airstrike campaigns - could not have influenced the decision making.

For the case of Kosovo, the first ministerial letter on the conflict was on 13 March 1998 - a few weeks after Serbia started to use military means against Albanians in Kosovo (De Wijk, 2000, 54) - and the NATO-led bombings started on 24 March 1999. In the Libyan case, the first mention of the conflict was in a VAO on 17 February 2011 and the bombings started on 19 March 2011. However, NATO only took full command on 31 March 2011, which will therefore be used as the starting date of the NATO airstrike campaign (Michaels, 2014, 22, 25). This has resulted in 24 documents for the Kosovo case (19 ministerial letters and 5 VAOs) and 10 documents for the Libya case (5 letters, 3 VAOs and 2 debates). These can all be found on a government website, where they are publically accessible.[14]

Letters and debates in which the subject was related to the conflicts in Kosovo and Libya, but that did not cover how the conflicts affect the Netherlands, were excluded. Examples are a ministerial letter about the terms under which the Netherlands was willing to contribute to an OSCE-observation mission in Kosovo (Kamerstukken II, 1998-99a), or a ministerial letter in which the parliament is informed about the progress of the Rambouillet conference (Kamerstukken II, 1998-99b). Although the subjects of these letters are related to the situation in Kosovo, the duration of the OSCE mission or information about which countries are represented at the Rambouillet meetings, does not imply how threatening the conflict in itself is perceived to be.

In order to compare the two cases, the parliamentary documents are coded according to the types of concerns that are expressed by the policymakers, as explained in the

[14] Using https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/zoeken/parlementaire_documenten - which is a part of https://www.overheid.nl/ - it is possible to search for parliamentary documents by the dossier numbers that are linked to each subject. For Kosovo the dossier number is 22181, for Libya it is 32623.

operationalization section. Each ministerial letter, parliamentary debate or VAO can be ascribed to multiple categories, as concerns for the humanitarian situation, the regional stability and the national interest could all be expressed in a single letter or debate. For example, in a VAO on the situation in Kosovo on 3 June 1998, the Dutch minister of foreign affairs expressed his concerns for the humanitarian situation:

> *"Homes are set on fire, livestock is being killed, the people are driven away or flee themselves. Indeed, it seems as though the Serbians try to rid the border region entirely of the Albanian population"* (Kamerstukken II, 1997-98a, 5).[15]

And, in that same VAO, the minister of foreign affairs also mentioned how "the danger exists that the civil war in Kosovo will lead to a war in the Balkans" (Kamerstukken II, 1997-98a, 6),[16] which can be categorized as a concern for the regional stability. An example of a ministerial letter in which concerns for the Dutch national security interests were expressed, is the letter by the minister and junior mister of foreign affairs on 25 March 2011 on the situation in Libya, in which they first state that the regional situation "can have consequences for the Dutch interests",[17] to then elaborate on how terrorism and illegal migration might be fostered, how the oil and gas reserves are vital for the Dutch energy supply and how the Netherlands has important trade interests in the region (Kamerstukken II, 2010-11a, 1-2).

When all the ministerial letters, parliamentary debates and VAOs are coded into these three categories, the results can be shown as in table 1. While both cases were mostly described in terms of the humanitarian crisis in the conflict areas - the category that indicates a low perceived threat - there is a difference in the distribution between the two cases. Less than half of the concerns that were expressed about the conflict in Kosovo were focused on the humanitarian situation (16 out of 34), while for the Libyan case these humanitarian concerns amounted to two thirds of the total (10 out of 15). Furthermore, the conflict in Kosovo was described more in terms of a regional stability crisis than the conflict in Libya was (13 out of 34 against 2 out of 15); while the Libyan case was only slightly more often described in terms of the national interests that were at stake than the Kosovo case (3 out of

[15] The original text being: "[h]uizen worden in brand geschoten, vee wordt gedood, inwoners worden verdreven of vluchten zelf. Het lijkt er inderdaad soms op alsof de Serviërs dat grensgebied geheel willen ontdoen van de Albanese bevolking" (Kamerstukken II, 1997-98a, 5).
[16] The original text being: "[h]et gevaar bestaat dat de burgeroorlog in Kosovo zal leiden tot een Balkanoorlog" (Kamerstukken II, 1997-98a, 6).
[17] The original text being: "[h]et ontbreken van sociaaleconomisch perspectief, het wegvallen van veiligheids-structuren, toenemende criminaliteit en het ontbreken van rechtsstatelijke waarborgen kunnen gevolgen hebben voor Nederlandse belangen" (Kamerstukken II, 2010-11a, 1).

Table 1. Ministerial letters, parliamentary debates and VAOs on the conflicts in Kosovo and Libya.

	Categories of consequences				
Conflict	(1) Humanitarian	(2) Regional stability	(3) National interest	Total	Avg.
Kosovo	47.1%	38.2%	14.7%	34	1.68
Libya	66.7%	13.3%	20.0%	15	1.53

Sources: https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/zoeken/parlementaire_documenten (see footnote 14).

The number of times the conflicts in Kosovo and Libya were described by the government in terms of the humanitarian crisis (n_1), the regional stability (n_2) or the Dutch national interest (n_3), as a percentage of the number times the conflicts were described in total (n_{tot}). The averages are calculated using:

$$\text{Avg.} = (n_1*1+n_2*2+n_3*3)/n_{tot}.$$

The average indicates where the two conflicts would be placed on a scale from 1 to 3, where a value of 1 would indicate that 100 per cent of the concerns were about the humanitarian crisis and a value of 3 would indicate that 100 per cent of the concerns were about the national interest. Values below 1.667 are classified as a low perceived threat and values above 2.333 are classified as high perceived threats - as defined in Appendix A.

15 against 5 out of 34). The conflict in Libya thus appears to have been perceived as less of a threat to Dutch national security than the conflict in Kosovo. When the 'averages' are used to classify the perceived threat of the conflicts as low, medium or high, this difference also becomes visible. With the Kosovo case being valued at 1.68, it is classified as a medium perceived threat, while the Libyan case, with a value of 1.53, is classified as a low perceived threat.

The second measurement of the perceived national security threat consists of the assessments of the conflicts by the Dutch intelligence agencies: the AIVD and MIVD. How the two conflicts were covered by these reports is compared in terms of the percentages of the words that are devoted to the conflicts and in terms of the number of different consequences that the conflicts were listed to have. The results of these two indicators are shown in table 2. The percentages of the total words that are devoted to the two conflicts do not give a clear indication of which conflict was perceived to be a bigger threat. On average, Kosovo was given more attention in the AIVD and MIVD reports for 1998 and 1999 than Libya in the reports for 2011. However, the difference is negligible (2.51 per cent against 2.47 per cent, respectively). As a result, when these percentages are related to the classification described in

Table 2. Annual reports of the AIVD and MIVD on the conflicts in Kosovo and Libya.

Case	Annual reports	Number of different consequences listed	Average percentage of words devoted to to the conflict	Average total number of words
Kosovo	1998, 1999	7	2.51%	16,183
Libya	2011	4	2.47%	22,383

Sources: AIVD, 2012; Binnenlandse Veiligheidsdienst, 1999; Binnenlandse Veiligheidsdienst, 2000; Militaire Inlichtingendienst, 1999; Militaire Inlichtingendienst, 2000; MIVD, 2012.

the operationalization, this indicator classifies the perceived threat of both conflicts to be at a low level, as they fall below the 3.33 per cent boundary.

The other measurement - the number of different potential consequences for the Dutch national security that were listed - indicates a more considerable distinction between the two cases. As shown in table 2, the conflict in Kosovo was reported to have seven different possible consequences for the Dutch security situation, while the conflict in Libya was reported to have only four possible implications. The two cases were reported to have some similar consequences for the Netherlands - e.g. the occurrence of incidents of violence in the Netherlands caused by Yugoslavian and Libyan minorities, or international terrorism in general being fostered by the conflicts (Binnenlandse Veiligheidsdienst, 1999, 11; Binnenlandse Veiligheidsdienst, 2000, 30-31, 35; AIVD, 2012, 6, 9, 37) - but only Kosovo was reported to potentially lead to attacks within the Netherlands or against Dutch citizens and interests abroad (Binnenlandse Veiligheidsdienst, 1999, 23-24; Militaire Inlichtingendienst, 2000, 2). These results support the findings of the analysis of parliamentary documents, as - according to the classification described in the operationalization - the perceived threat of the conflict in Kosovo is ranked at a medium level (5-9 consequences), while the perceived threat of the conflict in Libya is ranked at a low level (0-4 consequences).

Based on these three indicators, the overall conclusion is that Kosovo was indeed perceived to be more of a security threat than Libya. Two indicators classified the perceived threat of Kosovo as being at a medium level, while Libya was classified at a low level; and only one indicator classified the perceived threat of both conflicts to be at a low level. This also means, however, that the difference in the perceived threat was relatively small as neither conflict was perceived to be posing a high level threat to the Netherlands. Nevertheless, the

Kosovo case was perceived as more threatening than the Libyan case and, therefore, the first hypothesis is confirmed.

6.2 Neoliberal institutionalism

The second hypothesis suggests that the decision of whether or not to participate in the NATO-led airstrike campaigns in Kosovo and Libya, depended on the perceived value of NATO for the Netherlands. According to neoliberal institutionalism, the costs for a state of restricting its freedom of action by committing to an institution should be outweighed by the gains that are expected to be realized through that commitment (Keohane, 2005, 259). Accordingly, the Dutch government is expected to have perceived the value of NATO for the Netherlands to be higher in 1999 than in 2011. The perceived value of NATO can be derived from the long-term defense policies, or Grand Strategies, that were publicized and reportedly operating at the times that the decisions had to be made. During the Kosovo conflict, the security strategy was set out in the *Defensienota 1991* and the *Prioriteitennota 1993*. For the Libyan case, the *Defensienota 2000*, the *Prinsjesdagbrief 2003*, and the *Actualiseringsbrief 2006* are analyzed.

When the two cases are compared, the perceived value of NATO for the Netherlands seems to have remained fairly constant. This consistency becomes visible by looking at three aspects of the defense policies. First, the importance of NATO for the Netherlands is expressed in near identical terms in each publication. Despite the end of the Cold War, NATO was considered to be of "undiminished importance" in 1991; as the organization bound the United States to the European continent, which was considered to be "indispensable" to maintain peace and security in Europe (*Defensienota 1991*, 1990-91, 21).[18] Moreover, in 1993, NATO was called to be "an indispensible pillar of the Dutch security policy" (*Prioriteitennota 1993*, 1992-93, 4).[19] In comparison, during the Libya conflict, the security strategy was less oriented on the American presence on the European continent, but it still stated that NATO "guarantees the Dutch territorial integrity" (*Defensienota 2000*, 1999-2000, 5).[20] In 2003, NATO was called "the most important pillar of the Dutch security policy" (*Prinsjesdagbrief 2003*, 2003, 11), and in 2006 NATO was described - in less nationalistic

[18] The original text being: "de nauwe betrokkenheid van de Verenigde Staten bij de Europese veiligheid, die tot uitdrukking komt in hun lidmaatschap van de Navo, blijft onverminderd van belang. De Verenigde Staten zijn politiek en militair onmisbaar voor het handhaven van vrede en veiligheid in Europa" (*Defensienota 1991*, 1990-91, 21).

[19] The original text being: "[d]e Navo blijft een onmisbare pijler van het Nederlandse veiligheidsbeleid" (*Prioriteitennota 1993*, 1992-93, 4).

[20] The original text being: "[d]e Navo waarborgt onze territoriale integriteit" (*Defensienota 2000*, 1999-2000, 15).

terms - as "continuously developing as an alliance that brings stability even far beyond its own territory" (*Actualiseringsbrief 2006*, 2006, 6).[21] No considerable change has thus occurred between the two cases, in the terms in which the importance of NATO for the Netherlands is described.

The second aspect of the defense policies that remained fairly constant, is the way NATO is valued in respect to alternative institutions. Although European defense cooperation and bilateral defense cooperation with neighboring countries have steadily developed from 1991 to 2011, the way in which their function was described in relation to NATO remained largely the same. Bilateral defense cooperation - e.g. army divisions made up of Dutch and German soldiers - is seen as a way to improve the cooperation within NATO (*Prioriteitennota 1993*, 1992-93, 20; *Defensienota 2000*, 1999-2000, 30). And European defense cooperation is seen as the European pillar within the transatlantic alliance (*Prioriteitennota 1993*, 1992-93, 10-11), as it should not go at the expense of NATO (*Defensienota 1991*, 1990-91, 27; *Defensienota 2000*, 1999-2000, 31), and it is argued to be complementary - and not an alternative - to NATO (*Prinsjesdagbrief 2003*, 2003, 12-13). The third sign of continuity, is the fact that every new security strategy was either made in close consultation with NATO (*Defensienota 1991*, 1990-91, 6; *Prioriteitennota 1993*, 1992-93, 4; *Prinsjesdagbrief 2003*, 2003, 1), or the changes were made to conform with new agreements within NATO (*Defensienota 2000*, 1999-2000, 21; *Actualiseringsbrief 2006*, 2006, 2-3,7).

By analyzing the long-term defense policies of the Netherlands, large changes do not seem to have occurred in the perceived value of NATO for the Netherlands. NATO continued to be described as the most important institution for the security of the Netherlands, while other forms of defense cooperation have remained to be viewed as a way to improve the functionality of NATO, and, finally, NATO was involved each time changes were made to the Dutch security strategy. The Dutch government's perception of NATO appears to have been largely constant in 1999 and 2011. As a result, the different decisions as to whether to participate in the NATO-led airstrike campaigns in Kosovo and Libya were not preceded by a decline in the perceived value of NATO. The second hypothesis is thus rejected.

[21] The original texts being: "[d]e Navo is de belangrijkste pijler van het Nederlandse veiligheidsbeleid en belichaamt de transatlantische band" (*Prinsjesdagbrief 2003*, 2003, 11) and "[d]e Navo ontwikkelt zich verder als een bondgenootschap dat tot ver buiten het eigen grondgebied stabiliteit brengt" (*Actualiseringsbrief 2006*, 2006, 6).

6.3 Utilitarian liberalism

The third hypothesis stems from the utilitarian liberalist approach, in which policymakers are believed to be primarily interested in remaining in power. In their pursuit of political survival, policymakers are then expected to act in accordance to the preferences of the selectorate, i.e. those with the power to reappoint them (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2003, 7-8). In the Netherlands, this selectorate constitutes of the Dutch electorate, which means that the policymakers are expected to choose the policy alternative that they believe to be most favored by the public opinion. To test this hypothesis, the perceived public support for Dutch participation in the airstrike campaigns in Kosovo and Libya will be measured in two ways. First, the actual public support can be derived from public opinion polls that were held at the times of the two conflicts. To improve this comparison, a threshold will be used where a support between 40 per cent and 60 per cent is interpreted as being neutral.[22] And, second, the policymakers' expressions in parliamentary documents can be analyzed to compare how they perceived the public support to be during the two cases.

Four months before the airstrike campaign in Kosovo started, the Dutch public was asked in a study conducted by NIPO whether the Netherlands should participate in a potential NATO-led intervention in Kosovo, regardless of Dutch soldiers being killed (Everts & Isernia, 2001, 131). During the airstrike campaign, the question changed to "should the Netherlands go on participating in actions against Yugoslavia, also when casualties occur among its own soldiers" (Everts & Isernia, 2001, 131). During the airstrike campaign in Libya, the Dutch public was asked by the GMF's study to what extent they would support or oppose an intervention by the Dutch government to protect civilians in Libya (GMF, 2011, 82). The results are shown in table 3. In both cases, the respondents were found to be in favor of the Netherlands participating in the international intervention. Only in November 1998 - four months before the bombings in Kosovo started - did the support not exceed the 60 per cent threshold. During both the campaigns, however, the support was nearly identical: for Kosovo it was 68 per cent and 67 per cent, and for Libya it was 68 per cent in favor of Dutch participation. This indicates that the public opinion was not more opposed to Dutch participation in Libya than it was to Dutch participation in Kosovo.

However, the questions were not completely identical in both cases, and neither specifically mentioned participation in *NATO-led airstrikes*. Therefore, questions about support for the intervention in general and for sending Dutch ground troops are also shown in

[22] See footnote 11.

Table 3. Public support for Dutch participation in the airstrike campaigns in Kosovo and Libya.

		Support for:		
Case	Polling date	Dutch participation in the intervention[a]	The NATO intervention[b]	Sending Dutch ground troops[c]
Kosovo	Nov. 1998	58%		
	Apr. 1999	68%	78%	58%
	June 1999	67%		
Libya	May-June 2011	68%	65%	57%

Sources: Everts & Isernia, 2001, 131, 234, 254, 257-258; GMF, 2011, 81-81, 86.

The percentages of respondents who gave affirmative answers to the respective questions. Where necessary, the answer categories *strongly support* and *somewhat support*, and *strongly oppose* and *somewhat oppose* were combined.

[a] The exact questions were: Nov. 1998: "Suppose a military intervention by NATO in Kosovo will be decided upon. Should the Netherlands participate in such an intervention, even when it is almost certain that its own soldiers will be killed or wounded?" (N=Unknown) (Everts & Isernia, 2001, 131); Apr. 1999 and June 1999: "Should the Netherlands go on participating in actions against Yugoslavia, also when casualties occur among its own soldiers?" (Apr. N=980 and June N=897) (Everts & Isernia, 2001, 131); May-June 2011: "There are different ways to address the current situation in Libya, for each of the following, please tell me to what extent you support or oppose the [Dutch] government taking the following actions: Intervening to protect civilians (strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, strongly oppose)" (N=1000) (GMF, 2011, 82).

[b] The exact questions were: Apr. 1999: "Do you support the military actions against Serbia?" (N=Unknown) (Everts & Isernia, 2001, 254, 257); May-June 2011: "As you may know, international forces have been engaged in military action in Libya. To what extent do you approve or disapprove of the military action in Libya by international forces? (approve very much, approve somewhat, disapprove somewhat, disapprove very much)" (N=1000) (GMF, 2011, 81).

[c] The exact question text for Apr. 1999 is unknown, but it is described as along the lines of: should the Netherlands commit its troops if NATO decides to dispatch ground troops? (N=251) (Everts & Isernia, 2001, 234, 258). The exact question for May-June 2011 was: "There are different ways to address the current situation in Libya, for each of the following, please tell me to what extent you support or oppose the [Dutch] government taking the following actions: Sending [Dutch] ground troops to assist the rebels who oppose president Qaddafi (strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, strongly oppose)" (N=1000) (GMF, 2011, 86).

table 3. The results support the conclusion that the public opinion was not considerably more opposed to Dutch participation in Libya than to participation in Kosovo. In both cases, the Dutch respondents were supportive of the NATO intervention in general (78 per cent for Kosovo, 65 per cent for Libya), and in both cases the support for sending Dutch ground troops was slightly below the 60 per cent threshold (58 per cent for Kosovo, 57 per cent for Libya). The actual public opinion thus appears to have been equally supportive to participating in the bombings in Libya as to participating in the bombings in Kosovo.

Nevertheless, it could be possible that the policymakers had perceived the public support to be significantly different in the two cases. Indications for such perceptions are

derived from the parliamentary documents regarding the conflicts in Kosovo and Libya. In the ministerial letters, parliamentary debates and VAOs that were used to test the first hypothesis - which excluded documents dating from after the decision whether to participate in the bombings had been made - the public opinion was not mentioned by the policymakers a single time. When the measurement is expanded to include the letters and debates that took place after the bombings started, the public opinion is only mentioned in the case of Kosovo. On 22 March 2000, the prime minister, the minister of foreign affairs and the minister of defense sent a letter to parliament in which the Dutch actions in the NATO-intervention were evaluated. They mentioned how the public opinion, the parliament and the government had been in agreement on the issue (Kamerstukken II, 1999-2000, 3). In the parliamentary debate that followed this ministerial letter, prime minister Wim Kok elaborated on that statement:

> "*In the third week of March last year, there was no alternative for military action. Doing nothing was not an option. The parliament, the public opinion and the government were like-minded both before and during the crisis in Kosovo. This has been of great significance*" (Handelingen II, 1999-2000, 5003).[23]

However, as these statements were made one year after the airstrike campaign had commenced, this does not necessarily indicate that the policymakers perceived the public opinion to be supportive at the time that the decision was made. For the case of the Libya conflict, no such statements have been made. In both cases the perceptions of the public opinion will thus be classified as 'somewhat supportive' - where the opinion polls indicate a public opinion that was in favor, but the policymakers did not mention the public opinion at the time of the decision making.

This means that there is no evidence that confirms the hypothesis. Why the policymakers did not mention the public opinion in relation to the Libya crisis remains speculative. On the one hand, it could mean that public opinion did not play any role in the decision making, but - at the polar opposite - it could also mean that policymakers do not wish to reveal that they base their decision making entirely on public perception. The exact reason, however, is not necessarily relevant, as the expectation was that the public opinion was perceived by the policymakers to be less supportive in the case of Libya, which would then have influenced the decision making. No indications have been found that confirm this

[23] The original text being: "[i]n de derde week van maart vorig jaar was er geen alternatief meer voor militair ingrijpen. Niets doen was geen optie. Het parlement, de publieke opinie en de regering hebben voorafgaand en tijdens de Kosovocrisis een grote mate van eensgezindheid getoond. Dat is van cruciale betekenis geweest" (Handelingen II, 1999-2000, 5003).

expectation. In the first place, the actual public opinion was not more opposed in the Libya case, and, moreover, when the government justified the decision not to participate in the bombings, it never used public opposition as an argument. The only indication of public opinion playing a role in the decision making is that it was used as an argument to justify the decision to participate in the bombing campaign in Kosovo, one year after that decision had been made. However, this is not enough to conclude that the public support for Dutch participation in the airstrike campaign in Kosovo was perceived to be higher than the support for Dutch participation in the airstrike campaign in Libya. Therefore, the third hypothesis cannot be confirmed, and is rejected.

6.4 Liberal constructivism

The fourth and fifth hypotheses are derived from the liberal constructivist approach. As the approach assumes the decision making to depend on the worldviews or ideological backgrounds of the policymakers, the fourth hypothesis expects that the parties in Cabinet in 2011 were more ideologically opposed to Dutch participation in the bombings than the parties in Cabinet in 1999. This hypothesis will be tested by comparing the parties' manifestoes from 1998 and 2010. The fifth hypothesis expects the difference between the two Cabinets to lie in the coalition agreements, since the decisions of a multiparty coalition are based on the compromise between the parties in Cabinet, instead of on the beliefs of one party. If the parties in Cabinet, both in 1999 and in 2011, disagreed on the topic of Dutch participation in military interventions, it could still be possible that the different Cabinets settled on entirely different compromises.

During the conflict in Kosovo, the Netherlands was governed by the second 'Purple' Cabinet, led by Wim Kok. Starting in August 1998, it consisted of the social democratic PvdA (*Partij van de Arbeid*) with 45 of the 150 seats in parliament, the 'conservative-liberal' VVD (*Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie*) with 38 seats in parliament and the 'progressive-liberal' D66 (*Democraten 1966*) with 14 seats in parliament (Andeweg & Irwin, 2009, 63).[24] Of these three parties, the VVD is the only party that was also part of the Cabinet during the conflict in Libya. Starting in October 2010, this Cabinet, led by Mark Rutte, included the VVD with 31 seats in parliament and the Christian democratic CDA (*Christen-Democratisch Appèl*) with 21 seats in parliament. This minority government (with only 52 out of the 150 seats in parliament) was supported on immigration and domestic security policies by the

[24] "Kabinet-Kok II (1998-2002)" *Parlement en Politiek*. Available at http://www.parlement.com/id/vh8lnhronvx4/kabinet_kok_ii_1998_2002. [Accessed 9 May 2015].

'right-wing populist' PVV (*Partij Voor de Vrijheid*), but the PVV was not included in the Cabinet.[25] Therefore, the PVV was not involved in the decision making regarding the conflict in Libya. In fact, the parties in Cabinet - despite forming a minority - were the only parties involved in the decision making regarding Libya, according to the minister of foreign affairs (Kamerstukken II, 2010-11b, 32). The comparison will therefore only include these two coalition parties.

In none of the manifestoes did a party declare to be against Dutch participation in military operations. However, the manifestoes do differ, albeit more subtly. In general, the coalition parties in 1999 were more reserved about supporting participation than the parties in 2011 (see table 4). The largest party in Cabinet in 1999, the PvdA, referred to military intervention on humanitarian grounds as being both of limited effectiveness and of controversial legitimacy (PvdA, 1998, 66-67). Nevertheless, they argued that the Netherlands should be prepared to contribute to peace operations (either led by NATO or the UN), provided that there is a solid mandate (PvdA, 1998, 67). Finally, they argued that peaceful alternatives should be taken more seriously (PvdA, 1998, 67). The second largest party in Cabinet in 1999, the VVD, argued that the Dutch foreign policy should be primarily aimed at protecting Dutch citizens and Dutch territory (VVD, 1998, 41). Regarding military operations and possible Dutch participation, they stated that the Netherlands has a responsibility to contribute to international peace and security, but that "participation in operations by international organizations should only take place when there is enough clarity about the goals, the responsibilities and the sufficiency of both the mandate and the necessary means" (VVD, 1998, 41).[26] Finally, the smallest party in Cabinet in 1999, D66, considered international peace and security to be something that should be more the responsibility of the European Union - and not of the individual member states - and that peaceful alternatives to military action should be given more attention (D66, 1998, para. 504, 506, 507, 552). However, they also argued that NATO should play a larger role in peace operations outside its territory, and that the Netherlands should participate in such operations (D66, 1998, para. 556, 557).

In comparison, in 2011 the VVD - the only party that was part of both Cabinets - was slightly more supportive of Dutch participation in military operations. This time as the largest

[25] "Kabinet-Rutte I (2010-2012)" *Parlement en Politiek*. Available at http://www.parlement.com/id/vij7e8jky5lw/kabinet_rutte_i_2010_2012; "Vrijheid en Verantwoordelijkheid" *Parlement en Politiek*. Available at http://www.parlement.com/id/vj4dfrcua0wl/vrijheid_en_verantwoordelijkheid. [Accessed 9 May 2015].

[26] The original text being: "[d]eelname aan acties van internationale organisaties moet alleen plaatsvinden bij voldoende duidelijkheid over de doelstellingen, de verantwoordelijkheden en over de toereikendheid van het verstrekte mandaat en de in te zetten middelen" (VVD, 1998, 41).

Table 4. Statements from the manifestoes of the parties in Cabinet during the conflicts in Kosovo and Libya.

Case	Party (seats)	Responsi-bility to participate	View on military operations	Preconditions for participation
Kosovo	PvdA (45)	Yes	- Limited usefulness and legitimacy is controversial. - More focus on peaceful alternatives	- Solid mandate
	VVD (38)	Yes	-Protecting the national interest comes first	- Clarity about goals, responsibilities, mandate and means
	D66 (14)	Yes	- EU should take more responsibility - NATO should play a bigger role. - More focus on peaceful alternatives	- None
Libya	VVD (31)	Yes	- Participation is in the national interest	- None
	CDA (21)	Yes	- Foreign policy should be aimed at protecting human rights and furthering international law	- End date should depend on the goals and the accomplishments of the operation

Sources: PvdA, 1998; VVD, 1998; D66, 1998; VVD, 2010; CDA, 2010.

party in Cabinet, the VVD wished to end the annual cuts in the defense budget, since they feared that the armed forces would no longer be able to effectively participate in peace operations (VVD, 2010, 39). Similar to their statements in 1998, they mentioned that the Netherlands should contribute proportionally to peace operations, but this time they did not mention any preconditions (VVD, 2010, 39). Furthermore, they argued that it is in the national interest to participate in operations that are led by NATO, and, if possible, mandated by the UN Security Council (VVD, 2010, 40). The other party in Cabinet, the CDA, put great emphasis on the importance of an active foreign policy in relation to international organizations - including NATO - and they stated that foreign policy should be aimed at

protecting human rights and furthering international law (CDA, 2010, para. 11, 11.1.1, 11.1.3). About participation in military operations specifically, they only mentioned that "the Netherlands participates in international missions and crisis-control operations around the world",[27] and the only precondition mentioned is that the end date of such missions should not be rigid and 'short-term' but should instead be dependent on the goals and accomplishments of the operation (CDA, 2010, para. 11.1.7).

Since all five party manifestoes were supportive of Dutch participation in military intervention, there are no indications supporting the argument that the Cabinet in 2011 was more ideologically opposed to participation than the Cabinet in 1999. If anything, the 2010 manifestoes appeared to be slightly more in favor of Dutch participation than the 1998 manifestoes. In 1998, the two largest parties (83 seats combined) only agreed to participation under certain preconditions, and 2010 this was only the case for one party (21 seats). Moreover, the largest party of the Cabinet in 1998 was rather skeptical about military interventions, while the largest party in 2010 referred to Dutch participation in such operations as being in the national interest. And finally, only in 1998 did parties express the need to take peaceful alternatives to military operations more seriously into consideration. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis, that the parties in Cabinet in 2011 were more ideologically opposed to participation in military operations than the parties in Cabinet in 1999, is rejected.

Both coalition agreements, which are compared to test the fifth hypothesis, have a few paragraphs devoted to the Dutch foreign policy, the Dutch role within international institutions and to what extent the Netherlands is willing and able to participate in military interventions (see table 5). In the 1998 agreement, the Cabinet expressed its desire to honor NATO-agreements and it recognized that NATO will be more oriented towards preventing and containing violent conflicts. About these operations, the Cabinet then stated that: "the Netherlands remains to be prepared to contribute to them" (*Regeerakkoord 1998*, 1998, 83).[28] Finally, the Cabinet wished to maintain the level of ambition (i.e. the number of operations the armed forces should be capable of carrying out at any time) which meant that the defense budget had to stay at a "reasonable level" (*Regeerakkoord 1998*, 1998, 83).

In contrast, the 2010 coalition agreement was more restrained in regards to supporting Dutch participation in military operations. Again the Cabinet expressed its desire to fulfill its

[27] The original text being: "Nederland neemt deel aan internationale missies en crisisbeheersingsoperaties wereldwijd" (CDA, 2010, para. 11.1.7).

[28] The original text being: "Naast de klassieke verdedigingstaak is het van toenemend belang dat het bondgenootschap een actieve rol speelt in het voorkomen en indammen van conflicten die de internationale stabiliteit en veiligheid bedreigen. Nederland houdt vast aan de bereidheid om daaraan een bijdrage te leveren" (*Regeerakkoord 1998*, 1998, 83).

Table 5. Statements on Dutch participation in military operations from the coalition agreements of 1998 and 2010.

Cabinet	Should NL play an active role in NATO?	Is NL prepared to contribute to NATO operations?	To what extent should NL be capable to contribute?
Kosovo - Kok II (1998-2002)	Yes	Yes	Maintain level of ambition
Libya - Rutte I (2010-2012)	Yes	Depends on the international obligations and the national interest	Reduce level of ambition

Sources: Ministry of Defense, 2010; *Regeerakkoord 1998*, 1998; *Regeerakkoord 2010*, 2010.

responsibilities within the EU and NATO (*Regeerakkoord 2010*, 2010, 7). However, this time it also declared that:

> "*The current international challenges and conflicts, together with the Dutch financial and economic situation, necessitate both more careful considerations in the external policy and to adopt an integrated policy*" (*Regeerakkoord 2010*, 2010, 7).[29]

The agreement then elaborates on this statement, by mentioning that requests by NATO or the EU to participate in military operations will be weighed against the Dutch international obligations and the national interests, and that these missions should be partly financed from the budget for development aid (*Regeerakkoord 2010*, 2010, 8). Finally, the Cabinet wished to change the level of ambition of the armed forces in accordance to the findings of an exploratory study by the ministry of defense (*Regeerakkoord 2010*, 2010, 9). Although the coalition agreement did not specifically mention which conclusions of the 317-page-long report should be adopted, the study's main findings on the level of ambition were that the distinction between low-intensity and high-intensity operations is outdated and that the armed forces will have to concentrate more on domestic security issues in the future (Ministry of Defense, 2010, 210-211). Since the 2010 coalition agreement was more hesitant to accept requests to contribute to NATO-led operations and it also declared to reduce the level of ambition of the armed forces, it is considered to be less supportive of Dutch participation in

[29] "Integrated policy" is later explained as closer cooperation between the departments of defense, justice, police and development aid (*Regeerakkoord 2010*, 2010, 8). The original text being: "De huidige internationale uitdagingen en conflicten en de Nederlandse financieel-economische situatie maken het noodzakelijk scherpere keuzes te maken in het externe beleid en om geïntegreerd beleid te voeren" (*Regeerakkoord 2010*, 2010, 7).

an airstrike campaign than the coalition agreement of 1998. The fifth hypothesis is therefore confirmed.

7. Process tracing

The results indicate that the conflict in Kosovo was perceived by the Dutch government as a bigger threat to the national security than the conflict in Libya. Simultaneously, the perceived value of NATO remained fairly consistent and the public opinion was equally in favor of Dutch participation in the operations in both Kosovo and Libya. And while the parties in Cabinet in 2011 were not more ideologically opposed to Dutch participation in military interventions than the parties in Cabinet in 1999, the 2011 coalition agreement was in fact less supportive of participation than the 1999 agreement. Curiously, the findings of the last two hypotheses seem to contradict each other. When two parties largely agree on an issue, they are not expected to settle on a compromise that does not fit either party's initial preferences (Kaarbo, 2012, 4-6). This last section of the article will therefore be devoted to examining why this appears to have been the case for the Cabinet in 2011. To answer this article's main question, it is not sufficient to conclude that a 'pro-intervention' government reacted with military action to what they perceived to be a national security threat; while a Cabinet that was less supportive of participation in interventions responded to a lower security threat without resorting to the use of force. Instead, the causes and effects need to be linked together. It is important to understand why the 2011 Cabinet was less supportive of participation, as this also affects what the government considered to be the appropriate response to a security threat.

A possible explanation for the coalition agreement in 2011 being less supportive of participation, is the role of the PVV as the supporting or 'tolerating' party (*gedoogpartij* in Dutch). The PVV was markedly opposed to Dutch participation in military operations. In their 2010 manifesto they stated that "in the future, the Netherlands should only participate in peace operations in an extremely limited sense" (PVV, 2010, 41).[30] However, the party's role in the construction of the coalition agreement was limited. The Cabinet parties (VVD and CDA) did sign an 'agreement of tolerance' (*gedoogakkoord*) with the PVV about policies on immigration, policing and elderly care. However, foreign policy was part the actual coalition agreement, which was not supported by the PVV (Van Holsteyn, 2011, 418; Vermeend, 2010,

[30] The original text being: "Nederland moet in de toekomst slechts in zeer beperkte mate meedoen met vredesmissies" (PVV, 2010, 41).

chapter 5). The coalition agreement was an accord between the VVD and CDA, and the PVV could vote against policies from that agreement (*Regeerakkoord 2010*, 2010, 4). Therefore, the 2010 agreement was not less supportive of Dutch participation in military operations due to the PVV; instead it was more likely the result of the added constraints of the coalition parties forming a minority in parliament.

Since ideologically differing parties have to reach an agreement in a multiparty government, the foreign policy of such coalitions suffers from constraints and restrictions that do not exist in single-party governments. Therefore the dominant view within the coalition politics approach is that the foreign policy of multiparty governments is more "peaceful" than that of single-party governments (Kaarbo, 2012, 8-9). According to this logic, the larger the number of parties that have to be consulted to make a decision, the harder it gets for all parties to agree on something as controversial as the use of military force (Kaarbo & Beasley, 2008, 68-69). This should particularly be the case for minority governments, as they need a part of the opposition to support their decisions. This is illustrated by the decision of the minority Cabinet in 2011 to start a mission to train the police in Afghanistan. That decision required the support of four opposition parties, which resulted in the interdiction of the use of force in the eventual mission.[31]

When deciding on its foreign policy, the minority Cabinet of 2010 was restricted by the fact that their decisions would not automatically be supported by the parliament. To preserve the fragile coalition, such a Cabinet needs to avoid making controversial decisions (Kaarbo, 2012, 9). And while the use of military force in itself can be considered controversial, it is even more the case when the threat to the national security is perceived to be low. This indicates that the coalition agreement of 2010 might have been less supportive of Dutch participation in military intervention than the Cabinet parties would have preferred it to be, because the reliance on the support of opposition parties made a peaceful foreign policy more feasible.

In comparison, the Cabinet of 1999 was noticeably more prone to resort to the use of military force, despite the fact that the manifestoes of two of the three coalition parties emphasized a more peaceful foreign policy. Just one month after the Cabinet took office, it had already stated that the crisis in Kosovo could only be resolved by threatening to use military force against the Serbians (Kamerstukken II, 1997-98b, 3). Since these coalition

[31] "Meerderheid Kamer steunt 'papieren' missie Kunduz" *NRC* (28 January 2011). Available at http://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2011/01/28/meerderheid-kamer-steunt-missie-kunduz/ [Accessed 9 May 2015]; "Politie-missie naar Kunduz gaat door" *De Volkskrant* (28 January 2011). Available at http://www.volkskrant.nl/dossier-vk-dossier-de-missie-naar-kunduz/politiemissie-naar-kunduz-gaat-door~a1828891/. [Accessed 9 May 2015].

parties did form a majority in parliament, the Cabinet could take this more aggressive stance without needing the support of other parties. And while the willingness to use force might stem from the conflict being perceived as more threatening to the national security, it was the majority in parliament that made the Cabinet more capable to actually use it. Although the difference between the two coalition agreements was expected from a liberal constructivist standpoint, this difference does not seem to be the result of ideological motives. Instead the minority government of 2010 had to adopt a more feasible, peaceful foreign policy than their manifestoes would have suggested, in order to preserve the Cabinet. By contrast, the parliamentary majority of the 1998 coalition gave the government more freedom of maneuver, as it did not rely on the consent of the opposition.

8. Conclusion and discussion

In an attempt to better understand the decision of small states to participate in military operations, this article set out to explain why the Netherlands took part in the NATO-led bombings in Kosovo in 1999, but not in the NATO-led bombings in Libya in 2011. As these two cases shared some fundamental characteristics - e.g. both were led by NATO, both were limited to aerial operations and both were aimed at protecting civilians - a controlled comparison could be made. In this most similar systems design, the theoretical expectations of four different approaches were applied to explain the different policy outcomes in 1999 and 2011. From the neorealist approach, the conflict in Kosovo was expected to have been perceived as a bigger threat to Dutch national security, than the conflict in Libya. The neoliberal institutionalist expectation was that the value of NATO was perceived to be lower in 2011 than in 1999, and the utilitarian liberalist approach expected the public support for participation in the bombings to have been perceived as lower in 2011. Finally, from the liberal constructivist approach two hypotheses were derived. One suggested that the parties in Cabinet in 2010 were more ideologically opposed to Dutch participation in the airstrike campaigns than the parties in Cabinet in 1999. And the other expectation was that the coalition agreement of the 2011 Cabinet was less supportive of participation than the coalition agreement of the 1999 Cabinet.

Only the neorealist hypothesis and the second liberal constructivist hypothesis were confirmed by the evidence. The conflict in Kosovo was thus perceived as a bigger threat to the national security than the conflict in Libya, while the Cabinet in 1999 had agreed to be more supportive of Dutch participation in international military operations than the Cabinet in

2011 had agreed to be. The perceived value of NATO was found to have remained constant between the two cases and no indications were found that the public support for participation was perceived to be lower in the case of Libya than in the case of Kosovo. Remarkably, the parties in Cabinet were not more ideologically opposed to Dutch participation in military operation in 2011 than in 1999, yet they did sign a coalition agreement that was less supportive of foreign intervention. This can be explained by the restricted freedom of maneuver of the 2011 coalition, which was composed of parties holding only 52 out of the 150 seats in parliament. Since the foreign policy of the Cabinet needed the support of opposition parties, the foreign policy was more 'peaceful' - and thus more feasible to gain majority support - than what would be expected based on their manifestoes.

In conclusion, the Netherlands did participate in the NATO-led airstrike campaign in Kosovo in 1999 but not in Libya in 2011 because the conflict in Libya was perceived to be less threatening to Dutch national interests and because the Cabinet was less open to participation in 2011 than in 1999. The more peaceful foreign policy stance of 2011, however, cannot be traced back to the parties' ideological beliefs, but was more the result of pragmatic considerations. It seems as though the capability to use military force depends on the coalition parties forming a majority in parliament, while the willingness to use force relies on the perceived danger of the situation. However, questions whether the 2011 government would have responded differently to a more threatening conflict - such as the one in Kosovo - or whether the 1999 coalition would have participated in the airstrike campaign in Libya as well, remain unanswered. Based on this study, it is not possible to conclude whether the decision of small states to participate in international military operations is mostly dependent on the perceived threat of the conflict, the compromises in the coalition agreement, or the combination of both.

This could be the subject for future studies, in which more evidence of how the parties in Cabinet reached their compromises could be obtained from the minutes of the weekly meetings of the Council of Ministers. These minutes are kept secret for twenty years, as previously noted, and remain inaccessible for the time being. The testing of the third hypothesis could have also been improved, had opinion polls been available that were conducted and published shortly before the decisions whether to participate were made. This would have provided a more accurate indication of how the policymakers perceived the public support for participation in the airstrike campaigns. Cases where these data are available could be used in future studies, to support - or refute - the findings of this research. By including a larger number of cases, those studies could also identify to what extent larger

differences between the cases - e.g. in the perceived level of threat - have a different effect compared to a small degree of variance. With only two cases, it cannot be determined whether, for instance, low, medium and high degrees of perceived threat would each lead to a different expected policy outcome. Therefore, to improve the understanding of the foreign policy of small states regarding participation in military interventions, more research is needed.

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10 Appendices

10.1 Appendix A: Classification of the threat perceptions based on parliamentary documents.

For each conflict, the parliamentary documents can be categorized as focusing on one or more of three possible aspects of the conflict: (1) the humanitarian situation, (2) the regional stability, or (3) the national interests. This results in a certain distribution of the parliamentary documents across these categories (for example, 25% are humanitarian concerns, 25% are concerns about the regional stability and 50% of the concerns are about the national interests).

To classify this distribution as a low, medium or high threat, the 'average' way in which the conflict is described is calculated. When the values 1, 2 and 3 are attributed to concerns about the humanitarian situation, concerns about the regional stability and concerns about the national interests respectively, the average will always be between the values 1 and 3 - where a value of 1 would indicate that policymakers' concerns were exclusively about the humanitarian crisis and a value of 3 would indicate the concerns were entirely about Dutch national security interests. The perceived threat of a conflict is then considered to be at a low level when the average falls within the first tertile (between 1 and 1.67), it is considered to be at a medium level when the average is within the second tertile (between 1.67 and 2.33), and when the average is within the third tertile (between 2.33 and 3) the perceived threat of the conflict is considered to be at a high level.

In the case of the distribution that was given as an example, the average is 2.25, as 25 concerns - of the 100 in total - are about the humanitarian situation ($25*1$), 25 concerns are about the regional stability ($25*2$), and 50 concerns are about the national interests ($50*3$). Together that makes 225, which - divided by 100 - results in an average of 2.25. The perceived threat in this example is thus considered to be at a medium level.

The problem with this classification is that by attributing the values to the three categories, this ordinal variable is treated as an interval variable. This means that the difference in perceived threat between humanitarian concerns and regional stability concerns is treated as equal to the difference between regional stability concerns and national interest concerns. As a result, the value of the average has little meaning by itself, and can only be used to objectively rank the distributions (and not for any statistical analysis). This is also why only three ranks are used (low, medium and high), since five or seven ranks would require a precision that is not provided by using this 'average'.

10.2 Appendix B: Classification of the perceived public support.

The data from the opinion polls and from the parliamentary documents are used to classify the policymakers' perceptions of the public opinion as being (1) supportive, (2) somewhat supportive, (3) neutral, (4) somewhat opposed or (5) opposed to Dutch participation in the airstrike campaigns.

The opinion polls indicate whether a public opinion is in favor (61%-100%), neutral (40%-60%) or opposed of participation (0%-39%). And, simultaneously, in the parliamentary documents the policymakers can either mention the public opinion to be in favor of, or opposed to participation - or they do not mention the public opinion at all.

This results in a total of nine possible combinations, as shown in table B1. When both indicators point in the same direction, then the perceptions of the public opinion are considered to have been more supportive - or more opposed - than when only one indicator points in that direction. When the two indicators contradict each other, or when both indicators are neutral, then the perceptions of the public opinion are considered to have been neither supportive nor opposed - or, in other words, neutral.

Table B1. Possible combinations of public opinion polls and policymakers' expressions, and the resulting classification of the perceptions of the public opinion.

	Policymakers' expressions		
Opinion Polls	In favor	None	Opposed
In favor	(1) Supportive	(2) Somewhat supportive	(3) Neutral
Neutral	(2) Somewhat supportive	(3) Neutral	(4) Somewhat opposed
Opposed	(3) Neutral	(4) Somewhat opposed	(5) Opposed