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Burden-sharing as a Two-level Game: A Comparative Case Study of ISAF

Tabarez Rienzi, Fernando

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Burden-sharing as a Two-level Game: A Comparative Case Study of ISAF

Fernando Tabarez Rienzi

S2428318

Supervisor: Rutger Hagen

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Leiden University, The Netherlands

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1. Abstract

The prevalent theory of burden-sharing in NATO today did not accurately predict contributions in ISAF. Through an analysis of parliamentary debates in the United Kingdom and Germany, this paper argues that domestic factors are important predictors in contributions to alliances. Domestic and international concerns interact in a two-level dynamic, where a valuation of alliance membership and support by domestic elites play a central role.

Burden-sharing as a Two-level Game: A Comparative Case Study of ISAF

2. Introduction

In 2006 the member states of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) came to an agreement for a counterinsurgency and assistance mission in Afghanistan. Engaged in a campaign of counterinsurgency, whilst mandated with providing security to reconstruction teams and assisting in the training of the Afghan National Army, the demands of the mission were high if it was to be successful. The recent withdrawal by the United States from Afghanistan has signified an end to the war in Afghanistan and, ultimately, a failure by NATO to defeat the Taliban insurgency and aid in the formation of a nationwide security apparatus. Throughout the war, a point of discussion repeatedly came up: the allies are not doing or giving enough. Most surprisingly of all, however, is the fact that some large member states were severely limited in operational freedoms, and their vast potential went unused.

The initial observation spurring this investigation was the fact that contribution levels among large NATO member states varied considerably. A thorough review of the literature on burden-sharing revealed a wide variety of assertions. States operating on a bounded rationality would seek to satisfy their security needs. For large states in NATO, this involves giving more than their fair share to make up for free riding by smaller states who have lower thresholds of sufficient security provision. Despite this conclusion, which is widely shared within the literature, the empirical reality tells a different tale.

In the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), NATO's largest ever mission, the theory did not hold. Some scholars argued for domestic politics as the cause of non-optimal contributions and effort, presenting them as constraints on international cooperation (Lijphart 1999, Tsebelis 2002, Auerswald & Saideman 2012, 2014). To date, however, there has not been any work that examines the combination of domestic and international concerns to explain states' contributions to ISAF. These forces act as the pulling extremes in a two-level game, and outcomes are decided by limited ranges of decisions that can satisfy both domestic and international audiences.

How do domestic factors affect contribution levels to NATO? The theoretical underpinnings for this study are based on Olson and Zeckhauser's (1966) analysis of NATO as a

public good, Robert Putnam's (1988) theory of two-level bargaining by decision-makers between competing interests, and Saideman and Auerswald's (2012, 2014) studies on the restrictive effects of political systems. As of yet there is no research positing two-level games on NATO burden-sharing, an omission that is to the detriment of rational choice theory applied to collective security and alliance studies generally. This study has two objectives: to test Olson and Zeckhauser's theory of burden-sharing and to propose a two-level dynamic in burden-sharing through a comparative case study of two large European states.

3. Literature Review

Two-level games

The research draws from bargaining theory with Putnam's (1988) idea of two-level games. Any international commitment requires negotiation between domestic and international stakeholders. National leaders balance the interests of these two sides, each of which may also be heterogeneous and narrow the range of acceptable deals even further. The first level takes place in the international arena in which a tentative deal is struck between the involved parties. The second level is the proposal to national constituents over the deal's acceptability. Negotiations go back and forth between levels until an acceptable deal is reached or negotiations fail (Putnam, 1988, p. 436). The bargaining game that takes place can produce less than optimal outcomes at the international level. This theory is crucial to understanding the dynamics at play by which domestic political barriers affect burden-sharing in NATO: for instance, strict caveats were put on German military contingents as voting publics were unwilling to put their troops at risk, thus inspiring very risk-averse policies.

Public goods

The collective defence organized by NATO is defined by Olson and Zeckhauser (1966, p. 267) as a public good, given the pursuit of member states towards a common goal. Furthermore, the characteristics of this defence fit the definition of a public good as non-rival and non-excludable. The text of the North Atlantic Treaty stipulates in Article 5 that an armed attack against any one or more members shall be considered an attack on all (NATO, 2019), expressing the non-rivalrous and non-excludable properties of the alliance. This non-excludability is, however, limited to alliance members. A more exact categorization into which NATO fits is provided by Adams and McCormick's (1987, pp. 196-197) definition of a club good: a congestible good which is non-rival as long as the number of users remains small, that is easily excludable. NATO's defence is congestible because it is vulnerable to force thinning: the dispersion of military forces along wide or multiple fronts (Hartley & Sandler, 1999, p. 667).

That freeriding is present in NATO and larger allies are shouldering disproportionate burdens is first argued in Olson and Zeckhauser's *An Economic Theory of Alliances* (1966). The authors develop a quantitative model that ranks state contributions based on the relationship

between GDP and the percentage devoted to defence expenditures. The results show a positive correlation between the two variables, and they theorize that smaller nations free ride once Pareto optimal provision of the good is achieved alongside a cost curve. Since the amount of investment is higher for larger territories, disproportionality arises (Olson & Zeckhauser, 1966, pp. 268, 277-278).

Olson and Zeckhauser's findings are disputed by Sandler and Forbes (1980, pp. 425-430), who argue that the GDP – Defence expenditure relationship is no longer significant for a post-deterrence NATO. The replacement of nuclear deterrence to a flexible response strategy, they argue, problematizes the conception of collective defence as a pure public good and should be considered impure instead. The impurity comes from the increased rivalry that arises from the logistical and physical limitations of protecting every NATO-allied territory with conventional forces. As such, the authors suggest a joint product model that incorporates deterrence, force thinning, and research and development capabilities. They conclude that a proper assessment of contribution levels should focus on excludable benefits, such as technologically advanced armaments, their production, and the capacity to defend a territory with conventional weapons (Sandler & Forbes, 1980, pp. 427, 441-442). The results imply that the smaller European allies are not free riding as previously thought, as they must be able to provide for their own defence in case of non-nuclear escalation.

Starting in 2002 and the era of the war on terror, disproportionality starts to increase to levels before the 1967 shift to flexible response (Sandler & Shimizu, 2014, p. 45). Statistical models incorporating GDP, population, exposed borders, and terrorism within a country's territory show that the burden to benefits ratio declines at the outset of the War on Terror and continues on a decline until the cut-off date of 2010 (Sandler & Shimizu, 2014, p. 56), at which point ISAF was already underway. The authors claim that the reversal to a pure public goods dynamic like that originally proposed by Olson and Zeckhauser (1966) comes as a result of four interrelated factors: NATO expansion, the War on Terror, operations beyond allied territories, and the increased sophistication in military technology that has seen smaller allies lag behind in adoption (Sandler & Shimizu, 2014, p. 59).

Peacekeeping missions, counterterrorism operations, and challenges to expansionism by adversarial powers create purely public benefits for allies (Kim & Sandler, 2020, p. 404). A return to the Olson and Zeckhauser (1966) model of pure public goods, composed of freeriding

smaller allies and larger allies contributing disproportionately, would thus see these larger allies making most of the effort in carrying out NATO operations.

Domestic politics

A thorough look into the domestic factors is taken qualitatively by Auerswald and Saideman's book, *NATO in Afghanistan: Fighting Together, Fighting Alone* (2014). The book examines the events surrounding allied outputs through institutional and individual units of analysis. They employ a constructivist ontology with a principal-agent theoretical framework. The authors provide useful information on the effects of caveats on military contingents contributed to ISAF, as well as the effects of political systems and distribution of power within legislative bodies.

4. Theoretical Framework

Assumptions

The epistemological approach employed in this research is liberal institutionalism. Specifically, the neoliberal strand of Keohane and Nye (1973, 1998) that emphasizes interdependence among states, international cooperation, economic considerations in security affairs, and the role of institutions. A central component of the argument advanced in this paper is the role of political parties in supporting and opposing policy goals. Because the national factors are multi-leveled and encompass institutions and individuals, a theoretical lens based on liberalism is the most apt to the task (Zyla, 2015, p. 40). The pure public goods model of Olson and Zeckhauser (1966) was criticized for its unitary assumptions of states and realist understandings of power, particularly in the reasonings behind joining a defensive alliance (Zyla, 2015, pp. 33-35). An aggregate conception of a state can yield more accurate answers.

Conceptualization

Burden-sharing is defined as the distribution of costs and risks to achieve a common goal (Forster & Cimbala, 2005, as cited in Oma, 2012). NATO members are at once producers and users of collective defence. Provision of this public good necessitates a distribution of obligations between members of the alliance. The pure public goods model of Olson and Zeckhauser states that burden-sharing will be unequal, with larger states contributing disproportionately more to the alliance than smaller states. Contributions are, at its most basic, financial, and measured by the percentage of GDP devoted to defence (Olson & Zeckhauser, 1966, p. 266). This paper will extrapolate into an expanded view of contributions, considering what the budget is used on, and other budget allocations besides defence that are nonetheless important for ISAF (development and foreign aid, for example).

Alliance value refers to future benefits that a member expects to receive from an alliance (Massie & Zyla, 2018, p. 324), and is indicated by voluntary, rather than coerced, military contributions. Because Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty stipulates that State Parties may act as they deem necessary to assist an ally under attack, member states are free to choose how much to contribute. This concept can be applied to the alliance at large, or to its largest and most influential member, the US, as it is considered the backbone of the organization. For members

with a very high alliance value, one of the suggested explanations is status enhancement. This refers to the procurement of international prestige among smaller powers to get positive externalities like influence, bargaining power and better security (Massie & Zyla, 2018, p. 325).

Caveats are defined by Saideman and Auerswald (2012, p. 67) as “restrictions on what coalition militaries can and cannot do.” Caveats come from national governments’ civilian oversight and its variance is correlated with the type of political system. Majoritarian systems tend to have fewer caveats, while proportional representation systems tend to have more (Saideman & Auerswald, 2012, p. 67). Militaries with high combat and logistical capabilities that underperform can potentially be highly constrained by caveats, which would result in lower contribution levels than would be expected.

5. Research Design

Case selection

This qualitative comparative case study compares the discourses of senior government officials and members of lower houses of parliaments of large NATO states that participated in ISAF. Selection is performed based on size and GDP using a most similar system design, since Olson and Zeckhauser's (1966, p. 278) theory predicts that larger and wealthier states will contribute disproportionately to reach sufficient collective security. Two cases are compared: Germany and the United Kingdom. The two countries fit the definition of a large state. These states control large territories and vast economies. They are also similar in these characteristics: the United Kingdom has a territory of 242,500km² to Germany's 357,582km² (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2021), and a GDP of \$2.7 trillion to Germany's \$3.8 trillion (World Bank, 2020).

The two states function under different parliamentary political systems. Germany's political system operates under a mixed single-member districts and proportional representation design where governments are usually formed by coalitions of parties (O'Neil et al., 2018, p. 233). While the CDU and CSU parties are dominant, they have never obtained enough seats to obtain a majority government. The United Kingdom is a majoritarian system in which parties obtain seats according to simple pluralities in single-member districts, so that majority governments are often possible (pp. 47, 59). The theory would predict significant contribution by these allies due to their security needs. However, their actual performance in ISAF differed.

Methods

The method employed in this paper is a political discourse analysis in the lower chambers of parliament for the United Kingdom and Germany for the year 2009. Only the lower chambers are considered because, in the UK, the House of Commons is the prevalent legislative body (O'Neil et al., 2018, p. 54), and in Germany, the Bundestag is the body that represents the population whereas the Bundesrat represents the political subdivisions (p. 235). The year 2009 is analysed because it is the most crucial for identifying what drove and constrained the policies of each nation. This year coincided with an escalation of violence, a troop surge by NATO, and the second presidential and provincial elections for the nascent Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

(National Defense University Press, 2015). Late 2009 corresponds to the first talks of withdrawal from Afghanistan.

The method of analysis is a deductive, concept-driven qualitative comparative analysis. For this purpose, relevant speeches by parliamentarians and government officials are categorized into sections pertaining to each variable of interest. The categories are burden-sharing, public support, support of MPs, alliance value to either NATO and the US, and caveats. Burden-sharing contains speeches pertaining to a country's own contributions to NATO and reactions to the contributions of allies. Public support and support of MPs present the domestic conditions that can either constrain or favour contributions. Alliance value relates to the attitudes towards NATO and the US, and its aim is to gauge how motivated a country is to contribute, i.e., if there is a genuine interest or it is just going along. The use of the US as an indicator for alliance value is due to its role and influence within NATO and the international community. Finally, the caveats category is intended to gauge how restrained the troops in Afghanistan were in relation to other allied contingents.

A specification of party membership is made to account for potential bias by the speaker. Speeches are gathered from the online repositories of debates for the House of Commons and the Bundestag: the Hansard (<https://hansard.parliament.uk/>) and the *Dokumentations- und Informationssystem für Parlamentsmaterialien* (<https://dip.bundestag.de/>). For the United Kingdom, 22 sessions of the House of Commons are analysed. For Germany, 27 sessions of the Bundestag are examined.

6. Case Study

United Kingdom

Burden-sharing

The British experience of burden-sharing was marked by an exasperation over other ISAF partners not contributing as much as they should. Claims by MPs for pressuring the international partners for a fairer share of the burden was a common thread in the entire period. In this regard there were cross-party concerns.

Prime Minister Brown was resolute that Britain was shouldering the burden unfairly by holding the line in the south of Afghanistan with 8,000 troops (Hansard HC Deb., 29 April 2009, col. 871). He later announced that any further troop increase would be conditional on burden being spread more fairly among allies (14 October 2009, cols. 301-302). A few months later, Brown announced that eight allies promised to contribute troops to increase troop levels to 30,000 but would not reveal which countries they were (30 November 2009, cols. 835-838). The burden was not restricted to troop numbers; significant financial burdens were also undertaken. An increased operational budget of £3 billion was announced, with Brown expressing a desire for other partners to make equal investments (cols. 878, 884).

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence Quentin Davies said the government persuaded other NATO allies to increase their share of the burden, citing a doubling of French troops (Hansard HC Deb., 1 June 2009, col. 8). The Secretary of State for Defence Hutton acknowledged some improvement in burden-sharing but remained of the opinion that it was not enough (col. 13). The Government expressed support for EU defence arrangements that could improve European capabilities that can spill over to NATO (4 June 2009, col. 437). Hutton's successor, Bob Ainsworth, stated that if more troops were needed, they did not have to come from the UK, as they had provided enough (16 July 2009, col. 551). Ainsworth would later call on Afghans and NATO allies to cooperate because the UK could not and did not want to do the job alone (15 October 2009, cols. 464-465).

Within the Labour party, whose leader Brown formed the Government, complaints revolved around troop levels and helicopters. Andrew Mackinlay called the lack of allied commitment a grave failure of NATO (Hansard HC Deb., 1 June 2009, cols. 11-12), as the

prevalence of free riding meant that the US and Britain would ultimately provide a disproportionate number of troops (16 July 2009, col. 503). For Derek Twigg, success in Afghanistan rested on NATO being able to provide helicopters and support. It was NATO's responsibility to provide helicopters because UK had already contributed so many troops (16 July 2009, col. 521).

Despite forming Her Majesty's Opposition, the Conservative arguments were in line with those of Labour and the Government. Rural security in Helmand needed more forces, for which the allies should take responsibility (Hansard HC Deb., 12 January 2009, col. 12), as UK forces were already overstretched (1 June 2009, col. 8). Conservatives pressured the Government to assure 5,000 NATO troops that promised at the Strasbourg conference, worried that allied lack of commitment could end in failure in Afghanistan and the collapse of NATO (4 June 2009, col. 443). Fox pointed to the fact that some allies are not fulfilling the 2% of GDP rule (16 July 2009, col. 546), while Hollobone specifically named Germany and France as free riding on UK contributions (14 December 2009, col. 663).

Liberal Democrats also lobbied substantial criticisms on the imbalanced shares of burden. Demands were made for a stronger presence in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border and asked Hutton about assurances and commitments by NATO allies (Hansard HC Deb. 30 March 2009, col. 643). Bob Russell complained about empty allied promises, and pointing out that even under constitutional constraints, no other assistance has been forthcoming – medical, equipment or otherwise (4 June 2009, cols. 477-478). Sir Menzies Campbell argued that a two-tier NATO was emerging in which countries like Britain take on combat roles and others send troops with so many caveats they become ineffective, and that the UK should 'beg, borrow or steal' any vehicles or helicopters in possession of allies that they are unwilling to provide (16 July 2009, cols. 488, 524).

Public support

British involvement in Afghanistan was rarely supported by the public. The reasons for declining support given by MPs were varied: burden-sharing, lack of communication by the Government, the media, lack of transparency, and political campaigns by the Opposition.

Within the Government, Prime Minister Brown said the Conservative campaign accusing Government of underfunding has been disastrous for public support (Hansard HC Deb., 14

December 2009, cols. 660-661). This was perhaps intentional, as campaigning for general elections was underway. Secretary Ainsworth exhorted Parliament to improve communication with the public to gather support for the war (4 June 2009, col. 484).

Labour MPs worried about a lack of communication from the Government and the public perceptions of the mission in Afghanistan. A mass demonstration was staged in London during this year, advocating for complete withdrawal (Hansard HC Deb., 14 October 2009, col. 309). It was argued that this loss of public support was due to victory not seeming likely (14 October 2009, col. 316). Better arguments should be made, and more transparency should be had, about how success would be measured and why it was necessary to be involved in Afghanistan (16 July 2009, cols. 525, 530). For this, it would be necessary to unite across parties to justify the war to the public (13 July 2009, col. 5)

Conservatives echoed some of the arguments by Labour MPs. They mention scepticism over the necessity of involvement (Hansard HC Deb., 23 February 2009, col. 3) and lack of tangible results (15 October 2009, cols. 477, 520). Another concern was that unfair burden-sharing made British sacrifices seem thankless (23 February 2009, col. 15). The increasing fatalities in the British contingent was cited as a major reason for declining support (16 July 2009, cols. 495-496), and a warning was made that adding deaths to an already unsupported military campaign could lead to defeat (15 October 2009, cols. 534-535).

Support of MPs

The House monitored the Government consistently. There was cross-party support for the Afghanistan mission, but parliamentary sovereignty was defended. Campaigning for the 2010 general elections began in July 2009, and challenges to the Government were accordingly increasingly originating from Opposition benches. Debates in this period transform from seeking accountability to increasingly vicious arguments against the competence of Government officials.

Labour's Andrew Mackinlay complained that no mandate was issued from the House of Commons, and this led to a democratic deficit. He said that a vote was necessary to confirm endorsement of the House (Hansard HC Deb., 23 February 2009, cols. 2-3). The topic would return eight months later, evidently a major source of dissatisfaction among the majority party (15 October 2009, col. 485). Another criticism was the state of the Afghan National Police

(ANP), which were considered to be ‘incompetent and corrupt’ by a majority of Afghans (4 June 2009, col. 442). Liberal Democrats supported increasing troops in Helmand (29 April 2009, col. 877), while Conservatives approved of the increases conditionally: the Government must give clear goals, fix the problems of Afghan corruption and NATO burden-sharing, and provide better equipment for the troops (23 February 2009, col. 5).

Conservative opposition increased in the latter half of the year. The Government was accused to have no comprehensive strategy for Afghanistan (Hansard HC Deb., 13 July 2009, col. 4). Whitehall was said to be in disarray: no Cabinet committees existed for a comprehensive approach, national security, or development; the original objective for intervening in Afghanistan was lost; the Ministry of Defence’s leadership was weak and ineffective, and as a result relations between the military and the Government had worsened (16 July 2009, cols. 494, 505, 516, 528). Rumours of a controversial report on the Ministry of Defence’s procurement practices emerged and PM Brown was accused of delaying its publication in time for the annual defence debate, and a streak of ineptitude continued through a focus on quantity over quality in the Afghan National Army (ANA), and budget cuts to the Officers’ Training Corps programme (15 October 2009, cols. 475, 490, 496). The Conservatives would go on to win the election the following year.

Alliance value

The aggregated speeches of MPs point towards a preference for Britain’s relationship with the US over its involvement with NATO generally. Indeed, NATO appears to be viewed as a troublesome but useful security guarantee rather than a fruitful membership. Prime Minister Brown stated that the same strategy as the US was being pursued in Afghanistan (Hansard HC Deb., 29 April 2009, col. 876). When asked how consistent a reviewed strategy was with NATO, Brown answered that it was in line with NATO ‘and...of course...with President Obama’s statement’ (29 April 2009, col. 884).

An increase in troops was decided with a consideration of US policy (23 Feb 2009, col. 2). The UK’s regional strategy was also planned in concert with the US (30 March 2009, col. 644). The US is considered Britain’s closest ally (4 June 2009, col. 460), and Secretary Ainsworth advocated for close cooperation with a US that has improved massively in capability and performance (col. 484). Indeed, the relationship with the US is ‘special’ and more must be

done to maintain it (15 October 2009, col. 491). This transatlantic bias was not limited to defence, as another highly valued aspect of diplomatic closeness was the preferential trade relationship between the two countries. An American investment in a second engine for a joint strike fighter is a small percentage of its gargantuan defence budget, but a substantial boon for the British economy (col. 498). As Labour MP Havard put it, when the US says it needs help, NATO must provide aid (col. 500).

The valuation of NATO was more divided. The Labour government and MPs were generally in favour of the alliance, while Conservative MPs appeared sceptical. Secretary Hutton asserted that NATO will remain vital to UK security (Hansard HC Deb., 4 June 2009, col. 436). Labour MP Madeleine Moon stated that NATO and the EU are necessary partners in defence in a global world, to which Conservative William Cash retorted with the claim that the primary duty of the Army is to defend Britain, not cooperating (cols. 447-448). Conservative Ann Winterton argued that the UK's limited airlift capabilities were due to European 'incompetence' (col. 463). Others said NATO was 'fractured and divided' and that failure in Afghanistan would 'seriously undermine' the alliance (15 October 2009, cols. 459, 486). There was a further failure to cooperate as European allies did not commit to increase contributions at the Bratislava meeting (2 November 2009, col. 563). PM Brown later informed the House of his intentions to organise a NATO plan at the London conference, for a gradual handover of responsibility to Afghanistan in 2010 and to begin the process of withdrawal (14 December 2009, col. 643).

Caveats

Like burden-sharing, MPs across parties were displeased with the loss of efficiency in allied forces due to caveats placed upon their operational freedoms. There were repeated calls for the Government to pressure other allies to contribute more and remove caveats from their troops (Hansard HC Deb., 29 April 2009, col. 884). Germany provided 70% of airlift capacity that could alleviate British problems but they were 'severely constrained' by caveats (13 July 2009, col. 9); meanwhile, the Bundestag was embroiled in debating troop numbers and had not touched on the topic (16 July 2009, col. 493). The Prime Minister was urged to persuade Germany and other allies to remove non-combat mandates so their forces could share the burden more equitably (30 November 2009, col. 493).

Germany

Burden-sharing

When compared to the British case, the German experience seems like an exercise in justification. There were no calls for other allies to pull their weight; rather, the discourse centred around what Germany did provide to ISAF. Federal Minister of Defence zu Guttenberg said that Germany was the third-largest troop provider after the US and UK, and contributed to governance over 35% of the Afghan population in Regional Command North. He also drew attention to two Provincial Reconstruction Teams deployed in Kunduz and Faizabad, as well as involvement in training ANA and ANP personnel (BT Deb., 26 November 2009, p. 390). His predecessor, Franz Josef Jung, also argued for sufficient contributions by the Luftwaffe, operating over 51% of transport flights and carrying out aerial reconnaissance (17 June 2009, p. 25006). Other CDU/CSU parliamentarians congratulated the Government on being the third largest aid donor with €1.2 billion (26 November 2009, p. 402). Chancellor Angela Merkel promised to increase contributions to construction and development projects: infrastructure, education and police training (8 September 2009, p. 26299). Some disagreement did come from the opposition, however, like the FDP retorting that police training is not going according to agreed-upon levels. Only 43 law enforcement officers were training the ANP, less than half of what was promised to NATO (8 September 2009, p. 26301).

Public support

The state of public support was very similar between the UK and Germany. Similar points were raised in the Bundestag about public disapproval or indifference, lack of communication and transparency, and the media. Additionally, 2009 saw a controversial airstrike ordered by the German commander Klein which resulted in over 100 civilian deaths. Criticism was lobbied from every party, including the SPD-CSU coalition.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs Frank-Walter Steinmeier acknowledged that the Kunduz airstrike brought Afghanistan to an unfavourable spotlight. The public, busy with their daily lives, were looking for simple answers as to why the Bundeswehr is deployed abroad. He also spoke of signs in the street saying, 'Get out of Afghanistan' (BT Deb., 8 September 2009, p. 26302). CDU/CSU MPs also noted disinterest in the population for the mission. It was said that

it was difficult to arouse interest, except on occasions where there had been serious attacks on the Bundeswehr. There was no stable support like in the US, and the media did not portray the Bundeswehr realistically, preferring depictions as action heroes rather than peacekeepers (23 April 2009, p. 23561). These MPs also cited opinion polls revealing a lack of support for the Afghanistan mission if it was defined as a war effort – 60% of those polled did not approve (3 December 2009, p. 685). The SPD argued that public disapproval came from a combination of poor performance in Afghanistan policy, lack of transparency and the apparent need for a long-term commitment abroad. The lack of transparency led to an uninformed and disinterested public (BT Deb., 8 September 2009, p. 26310). Furthermore, massive setbacks increase concern and rejection for the German mission (26 November 2009, p. 386), a problem greatly exacerbated by the changing image of the Bundeswehr after the Kunduz incident (3 December 2009, p. 669). President Obama's assertion that success in Afghanistan will only become apparent after a long time is a warning sign, as the German democracy will not approve of a commitment for the next 10 to 15 years (3 December 2009, p. 679).

The opposition was equally gloomy about the prospects for public support. The FDP warned that the Federal Government was not communicating the political mandate given to the Bundeswehr in Afghanistan to the public to garner support (BT Deb., 23 April 2009, p. 23556), and it had to be clear whether ISAF was a combat mission or a peace enforcement (2 July 2009, p. 25743). The Bündnis 90/Die Grünen claimed that the population thought Germany had switched to the wrong strategy (8 September 2009, p. 26307). Die Linke, the most critical parliamentary group, said that 61% of Germans disapproved of the deployment of Bundeswehr in Afghanistan (23 April 2009, p. 23559), and a majority wanted a withdrawal (26 November 2009, p. 392).

Support of MPs

Among the parliamentary groups, there were clear party lines drawn between those forming the coalition and the opposition parties. The formation of a new FDP-CSU Government in November 2009 marked a shift in SPD rhetoric; similarly, the FDP went from opposition to support of the Government, although in general the party was in favour of the Afghanistan Mandate. The Greens and the Left were the most critical parties, and they remained in the opposition throughout the 16th and 17th Bundestag. The main topics of discussion were German

participation in the Airborne Warning And Control System (AWACS), and the scandal surrounding Minister of Defence Franz Josef Jung withholding information about the Kunduz airstrike.

The CDU/CSU supported the AWACS mandate, arguing that it was for the safety of all air traffic and would not be used militarily. Military use was not wanted politically and not possible technically as the planes were only equipped for surveillance. It would not contribute to combat missions, as the Taliban did not have any equipment that AWACS could detect (BT Deb., 17 June 2009, p. 25011). Further, the party said that the opposition had turned the Afghanistan debate into an election debate. They claimed the opposition falsely accused the Government of trying to cover up an incident and did not support the mission. Moreover, if NATO were to withdraw from Afghanistan, it would be a great victory for the Taliban and Al Qaeda (8 September 2009, p. 26308).

The SPD also agreed to support the AWACS mandate, citing the need for civil air security and training for the purpose (BT Deb., 2 July 2009, p. 25740). The party also supported the merging of ISAF and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF): there was no point in obscuring the fact that AWACS was intended to aid a ground war, as it was necessary (17 June 2009, p. 25009). SPD attitudes turned after November: the party argued that no progress had been made in Afghanistan, and a withdrawal should be planned out (26 November 2009, p. 404). They called for a committee of inquiry after media reports revealed that Minister Franz Josef Jung deliberately withheld information from Parliament about the Kunduz incident. They claimed the German public wanted to know what happened, and said it was 'pathetic' that the information had to be extracted bit by bit (26 November 2009, pp. 387, 490).

The FDP was ambivalent despite being the largest opposition faction, and generally agreed with the Government's goals (BT Deb., 8 September 2009, p. 26302). They supported the Government's stance on reviewing NATO strategy (26 March 2009, p. 23125), and the AWACS mandate (2 July 2009, p. 25742). However, some criticism was lobbied at a lack of clarity from the Government on contributions to NATO and it was the party's opinion that a large number of troops be deployed (26 March 2009, p. 23136). Moreover, they were dissatisfied with the extent of the debate on AWACS, since it was supposedly an urgent matter, and arguing over non-combat use was ridiculous since even the UN Security Council was in favour of merging ISAF and OEF (17 June 2009, p. 25005). The party was also reluctant to be engaged in Afghanistan for

the long term, but it argued that withdrawal should be done in a responsible manner that will not allow Taliban to take over and give a haven to terrorists (8 September 2009, p. 26301). They rebuked opposition accusations of being warmongers after forming the government and defended extending the ISAF mandate for another year, saying that if deployment was not approved, the Bundeswehr would have to withdraw within two weeks and leave Afghans to their fate (3 December 2009, p. 678).

The Bündnis 90/Die Grünen questioned many of Chancellor Merkel's policies and actions. They were displeased with the lack of debate on conscription, engagement with the new US administration, and the fact that the Americans were carrying out commando operations with civilian casualties in the German area of responsibility (BT Deb., 26 March 2009, pp. 23134-23135, 23333-23334). On AWACS, they questioned the necessity and urgency of the mandate, questioning whether their use would be for security or a contribution to military escalation (17 June 2009, p. 25008). A by-product of a secure airspace may be more increased air strikes and civilian deaths. Moreover, the Merkel government had been characterized by half-hearted measures and failures, and the civilian aspect of ISAF had been abandoned. Thus, they would abstain or reject the mandate (2 July 2009, pp. 25746, 26025). They said Government had overwhelmingly imbalanced budgetary allocations in favour of the military (26 November 2009, p. 394). Moreover, there was no transparency after a statement from Merkel only came after sustained pressure from the opposition (8 September 2009, pp. 26306-26307), and even then, the Government expected continued approval for deployments (3 December 2009, p. 674).

Politicians from the Die Linke group were more suspicious and disapproving of Government actions. Sevim Dagdelen said that the stated goals of democratization, reconstruction and protection of human rights had not been achieved and may as well have been a pretext. The Government's claims of purported stability in Afghanistan were used to justify deportations and avoiding its legal obligations for asylum (BT Deb., 22 January 2009, pp. 21695-21696). The party believed the intervention in Afghanistan was more based on economic interests than humanitarian values, citing arms exports to Pakistan (26 March 2009, p. 23333), and foreign policy documents making it clear that the Government was more concerned with obtaining raw materials around the world using the Bundeswehr (10 November 2009, pp. 77-78). They also accused the Chancellor and Ministry of Defence of using civil reconstruction as an excuse, saying that the violence had escalated to the point where no civilian work could be done

(8 September 2009), and the portrayal of the campaign as an aid mission ignores civilian deaths and makes it seem as though Germany is sending care packages to Afghanistan instead of soldiers (3 December 2009, p. 672). The Left was strongly opposed to the AWACS mandate as they argued it would be used for bombing operations (2 July 2009, p. 25746), and was part of an intensification of an illegal ground war that was not approved by the UN (17 June 2009, pp. 25007-25008). A common conclusion to the Left's speeches was that arms exports should stop, and the troops should be withdrawn immediately.

Alliance value

The German expressions of alliance value tended to side with NATO, with the US seen as a necessary evil. Even then, contributions to NATO were seen as legal obligations rather than based on voluntary involvement. Chancellor Merkel's policy was, in summary, one of following the leader and simply going along.

The Chancellor considered NATO's goal to turn enemies into friends, and said Germany had a debt to NATO. A transatlantic partnership meant collaborating on all aspects (BT Deb., 26 March 2009, pp. 23120-23121). The Bundeswehr's heavy fighting against the Taliban was a necessary contribution to NATO, as the stage was prepared for a handover of responsibility to the Afghan authorities (8 September 2009, pp. 26297-26298). State Secretary to the Federal Minister of Defence Kossendey said the Government took no position on NATO internal processes (11 February 2009, p. 22052). Later in the year, Minister for Foreign Affairs Guido Westerwelle said that the Government would create a plan for withdrawal following the speech by President Obama (3 December 2009, p. 668).

The CDU/CSU bloc was supportive of NATO. They considered the alliance a great opportunity and a necessary partner in protecting national interests (BT Deb., 26 March 2009, pp. 23130, 23132). They lamented the fact that, whereas other countries managed bipartisan consensus, German politics saw no such unity. The Left was wrong in criticizing NATO, saying Germany was proud of being a member and 62% of the German public agreed. The party acknowledged that 2009 had been the most casualty-heavy year for ISAF but said the country must remain committed in achieving the conditions for a handover of responsibility (10 November 2009, p. 75). For that purpose, concrete, realistic targets would have to be set to create the conditions for withdrawal by late 2013 (3 December 2009, pp. 683-684). Interestingly, the

CDU/CSU advocated for the dismantlement of nuclear weapons stored in Germany (10 November 2009, p. 75).

The SPD was equally supportive of NATO but expressed reservations in collaborating with the US. They considered NATO a community of values and conflict prevention, but were opposed to further enlargement (BT Deb., 26 March 2009, pp. 23127, 23143). They expressed a desire for the Bundeswehr to be considered a vital partner in Afghanistan and criticized the US for breaking German trust by conducting secret operations in Germany's area of responsibility (26 March 2009, p. 23141). They were also of the opinion that the US makes unanimous decisions and expects NATO to follow, and what Obama wants is not an alliance of equal partners but a coalition of the willing (3 December 2009, p. 670).

The FDP and the Bündnis 90/Die Grünen did not express any strong sentiments for either NATO or the US. The FDP said Germany should not intervene in Pakistan because it no longer had an OEF mandate (BT Deb., 12 February 2009, p. 22262), and warned against NATO becoming a replacement UN (26 March 2009, p. 23126). The Greens spoke of redundancy in NATO and EU objectives, and lobbied criticism at the Government for pursuing international prestige instead of engaging in a NATO strategic review (26 March 2009, pp. 23134, 23140).

Die Linke was the most contrarian party, expressing opposition to any German involvement in a war, NATO policies, and, by extension, US leadership. The party accused the US of conducting illegal attacks on Pakistan (BT Deb., 12 February 2009, p. 22263). They quoted Aeschylus' 'in war, truth is the first casualty,' as there was *de facto* no separation between ISAF and OEF, with both missions even being led by the same commander (26 November 2009, p. 494). NATO was violating international law, its mission had failed and had no right to establish itself in Afghanistan (2 July 2009, p. 25745). They said German involvement was unconstitutional: the statement that Germany was being defended in Afghanistan was a myth to avoid the constraints of Article 26 of the Basic Law. Germany was waging war, and it was turning into a war of aggression. They called for an end to the war and the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan (10 November 2009, p. 87). The point was made that NATO had been conceived as a defensive alliance, prohibiting the use of force except in self-defence. The threat of violence should thus not be used as a political tool. Despite these principles, NATO accounted for two-thirds of arms expenditure in the world. NATO had become an interventionist alliance that waged illegal wars for Middle Eastern oil and gas. The Left stood

for peace and disarmament, they said, and rejected the transformed NATO. NATO disregards international law, Geneva conventions, and had killed 800 civilians. The Bundeswehr should be withdrawn (26 March 2009, pp. 23128-23129, 23130). Finally, they questioned the Government's wording in its application for a renewal of the ISAF mandate as was 'a question of credibility and reliability as an ally,' and illustrated the point by imagining a soldier under fire and his commander saying: "you are doing this to demonstrate German loyalty to the Alliance" (3 December 2009, p. 673).

Caveats

There was a dearth of discourse relating to caveating. What was found was generally in support of restraint and tight rules of engagement. The State Secretary to the Federal Minister of Defence Kossendey said that military force must only be used under principles of international law and proportionality. The excessive use of force delegitimises the ISAF mission, so the Federal Government and the Bundeswehr exercise restraint (BT Deb., 11 February 2009, p. 22053). The SPD, part of the Government coalition, said that the mission in Afghanistan was for stabilisation. As such, military means must be restricted as much as possible. The actions of the Bundeswehr had to be in accordance with international humanitarian law (2 July 2009, p. 25741).

7. Discussion

Despite the similarities in size and economy, the domestic conditions and international concerns were very different for the UK and Germany. On an international level, the UK was willing to contribute disproportionately to NATO. Its main concern internationally was maintaining a close diplomatic relationship with the US, with whom it had lucrative trade arrangements and strategic partnerships. The speeches in the House of Commons point to a valuation of the alliance with the US as more important than the UK's membership in NATO more generally. Where NATO was concerned, it was usually the subject of criticism over free riding and insufficient contributions. The conclusion drawn from the discursive evidence is that NATO was seen as an annoyance that had to be tolerated for the sake of friendship with the US. For Germany, the opposite was the case. It valued its membership in NATO highly, and members of the governing coalition spoke of it beyond an assessment of the institution as a defensive alliance. For the Germans, NATO was a community of Western values and a symbol of friendship. The US was regarded negatively, with the general opinion being that it acted too unilaterally than would be acceptable in a supposed partnership. What could also be gleaned from the discourse is that alliance value was more uniform in the UK: similar praise for the relationship with the US is observed in Labour, Conservative, and Liberal Democrat MPs. Germany was more fragmented. The most supportive parties were the CDU/CSU and the SPD, The FDP and the Greens were somewhat indifferent, and the Left was strongly opposed. Despite this fragmentation, the CDU/CSU still managed to carry its interests to the Government. Based on the evidence, the international extreme of the two-level game can be seen to tending towards large contributions in both cases.

Domestically, it is possible to assess a relationship between support in Parliament and the outcome in sharing the burden. In the United Kingdom, there was consensual support for British deployments abroad. Criticism was lobbied at policies of the Government and burden-sharing by allies, but there was agreement in the necessity to intervene in Afghanistan and a willingness to prove a valuable ally for the US. Indeed, status-seeking appeared to be the main driver of British contributions as it sought to prove itself as a trustworthy partner and obtain a degree of influence in American foreign policy. Conversely, its commitment to the Afghanistan mission was unmatched by other allies and this caused resentment by MPs accusing others of not taking on their fair share of the burden. Support by British MPs led to permissive domestic conditions towards larger contributions. In Germany, the competition between five parliamentary groups

produced a much more divided support for the Government. The CDU/CSU was uniformly supportive of Government policies. SPD and FDP support varied depending on their status as coalition partners or opposition. The Greens and the Left were generally opposed to the Government's foreign policy. The outcome of burden-sharing thus depended on the CDU/CSU being able to propose contributions acceptable to its coalition partners, which can explain the sub-optimal burden-sharing, particularly in troop numbers and operational freedom. Because air transport and supply did not generally put personnel in harm's way, it is possible to see that the German contribution in helicopters was substantial. Similarly, the Government was able to obtain sufficient support to participate in the AWACS mandate. In summary, the German case was one of bargaining between parties and risk aversion, opting to contribute more in safer aspects of the ISAF mission.

Interestingly, both cases showed that public support was low, but it did not seem to affect the level of contributions. A possible explanation for this can be the cited indifference by some members of parliament in both cases, where interest in the Afghanistan mission flares up whenever a major event makes the news. Another factor at play can be the lack of communication from both governments, which could be intentional in order to keep the mission out of the public consciousness. Caveating also did not seem to play a factor in contributions, although it did raise objections of unfair burden-sharing by partners due to the loss in effectiveness in operational freedoms.

8. Conclusion

The results of the research provide some support in favour of burden-sharing as a two-level game. The expectations that domestic factors are important variables in burden-sharing which the Olson and Zeckhauser model overlooks have been satisfied. The results point towards alliance value and support by MPs as being the principal deciders of contribution levels. Interestingly, public support did not seem to have a major influence in burden-sharing, which poses some important implications for the purported accountability of democratic governments. Moreover, the results presented here should lead to a reconsideration of how burden-sharing in alliances is likely to be divided.

The research yielded interesting results, but there was an inherent limitation in analysing discourse to evaluate economic theories. Further research can draw from the conclusions drawn here to carry out quantitative analyses. Designing a model presenting the proposed variables can also be beneficial; this will be the subject of an extension to this research paper.

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