



EXAMINING THE EXPLANATORY POTENTIAL OF POLIHEURISTIC THEORY IN THE FOREIGN POLICY DECISION-MAKING OF SMALL STATES

THE CASE OF SWEDEN'S PARTICIPATION IN
OPERATION UNIFIED PROTECTOR

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ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to conduct a first test of the explanatory potential of the poliheuristic theory of foreign policy decision-making in the context of small states. The case studied is the Swedish decision to contribute to the UN-sanctioned and NATO-led Operation Unified Protector in 2011. The paper conducts a theory-testing Causal Process Tracing (CPT) study drawing on a variety of different sources including news articles, parliamentary records, government bills, official statements and remarks made by key individuals, and secondary sources. The result of the analysis demonstrate the potential validity of the poliheuristic understanding of the decision-making process operating in a small state, but fall short of demonstrating actual validity. The final results are thus more akin to results typically found in a plausibility probe case study, and future research is deemed merited based on the potential validity found.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Over recent years, the poliheuristic theory has emerged as an interesting and promising way to explore and explain the processes and outcomes of foreign and security policy decision-making. As scholars in the field of Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) has sought to unpack the traditional ‘black box’ of the state, as it most often has been understood, conceptualized and studied by traditional theorist of International Relations (IR), much has been learnt about the individuals and processes involved in decision-making.¹ Through these efforts, two dominant schools of thought about decision-making have emerged – rational choice approaches and cognitive psychological approaches. Traditionally, the former has focused on preferences of leaders and outcomes of decisions, whereas the emphasis of the latter has been on process and focused on how framing and problem representation, belief systems, schemata and information processing influence decision-making.²

The poliheuristic theory of decision-making was developed against the backdrop of these wider theoretical and methodological developments within FPA, and specifically with the idea of providing a bridge between the rational choice approaches and the cognitive psychological approaches to decision-making. By drawing on the insights of both approaches, the poliheuristic theory claims that decision-making happens in a two-stage process. In the first stage, decision makers utilize a cognitive shortcut (heuristic) in order to eliminate the decision options that do not satisfy a key criterion for the decision maker. Specially, the poliheuristic theory suggests that leaders – regardless of nationality, ideological position or entity that they lead (e.g. a state, an armed group, an international organization, etc.) – always discard decision options that are politically unacceptable – put differently, options that threaten their political survival. Furthermore, the poliheuristic theory argues that failure to satisfy this criterion cannot be compensated for by expected

¹ See for example, Hudson, Valerie M. “Foreign Policy Analysis: Actor-Specific Theory and the Ground of International Relations.” *Foreign Policy Analysis* 1.1 (2005): 1-30. and, Redd, Steven B., and Alex Mintz. “Policy Perspectives on National Security and Foreign Policy Decision Making.” *The Policy*

² Brulé, David J. “The Poliheuristic Research Program: An Assessment and Suggestions for Further Progress.” *International Studies Review* 10 (2008). P. 266

gains in relation to a different dimension of the decision. For example, for a leader of a state, domestic politics constitute the key, noncompensatory dimension of foreign policy decisions. If a policy options fails to satisfy the leaders domestic political concerns, i.e. it constitutes a threat to their ability to remain in power, this cannot be compensated for by major economic, diplomatic, military or other gains. Once all policy options that fail to satisfy this noncompensatory dimension of the decision are eliminated, the decision maker then proceeds to the second stage of decision-making. In the second stage, the remaining options are evaluated and analyzed, and a final decision is made based on the expected utility of the selected option.³ As such, the poliheuristic theory draws on both the ‘maximizing gains and minimizing risks’ behavior suggested by the rational actor approaches and the types of cognitive shortcuts that are expected by cognitive psychological approaches.

With the potential of bridging this key theoretical divide in the field of FPA, and with a hitherto impressive empirical track record of applying the poliheuristic theory to different foreign policy events to explain both the process and outcome of decision-making, the poliheuristic theory most certainly has passed the threshold of being an interesting candidate for further scholarly exploration.⁴ It has also demonstrated its applicability to a wide range of different decision actors and contexts – from national leaders to leaders of non-state armed organizations, from countries like the United States to countries like China.⁵ Some advocates of the poliheuristic theory have gone as far a claiming that it “is useful for predicting the behavior of *all* international leaders.”⁶ This range of applicability is another reason why poliheuristic theory is an interesting candidate for further exploration, especially when considering that the majority of FPA scholarship still is focused on the United States (which, of course, is

³ Mintz, Alex. “How Do Leaders Make Decisions? A Poliheuristic perspective” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48.3 (2004). P. 3

⁴ Stern, Eric. “Contextualizing and Critiquing the Poliheuristic Theory.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48.1 (2004). P. 108

⁵ For an overview, see Mintz, Alex. “How Do Leaders Make Decisions? A Poliheuristic perspective” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48.3 (2004). P. 4-5. For more specific examples, see for instance Kinne, Brandon J. “Decision Making in Autocratic Regimes: A Poliheuristic Perspective.” *International Studies Perspectives* 6.1 (2005): 114-228., Brulé, David J. “Explaining and Forecasting Leaders’ Decisions: A Poliheuristic Analysis of the Iran Hostage Rescue Decision.” *International Studies Perspectives* 6.1 (2005): 99-113. or Sandal, Nukhet A., Enyu Zhang, Carolyn C. James, and Patrick James. “Poliheuristic Theory and Crisis Decision Making: A Comparative Analysis of Turkey with China. *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 44.1 (2011): 27-57.

⁶ Brulé, David J. “Explaining and Forecasting Leaders’ Decisions: A Poliheuristic Analysis of the Iran Hostage Rescue Decision.” *International Studies Perspectives* 6.1 (2005). P. 100

understandable given the U.S.' status as a global superpower and its role in the post-Cold War era, particularly following the events of 9/11 and in the following Global War on Terror).⁷

These two observations – the promising potential of the poliheuristic theory and its associated research program, and the remaining relative dominance of the U.S. as the focus of study in FPA more broadly – constitute the two main starting points for this paper.

1.2 Rationale, Purpose and Research Question

As Brulé has noted, “in an increasingly dangerous world, forecasting national leaders’ decisions during crises is a central concern of policy analysts.”⁸ Given the wide range of options available to leaders when faced with a foreign policy decision situation, both crises and more routine matters, this can be challenging to achieve. Thus, efforts that improve our ability to understand and predict foreign policy decisions would contribute both to the future accuracy of policy analysts as well as to the ongoing scholarly debate between different perspectives of foreign policy decision-making. As highlighted in the introduction to this paper, the poliheuristic theory has demonstrated some promising potential in accounting for both the process and outcome of foreign policy decision-making, and it makes rather bold claims about its applicability to different settings. As such, it seems worthy of further exploration and testing. In particular, and as Stern points out in his examination of the poliheuristic research program, “a particularly promising candidate for further empirical examination, in both laboratory and natural settings, is the notion of the two-stage process.”⁹

Bearing in mind the other observation from the introduction to this paper – that a majority of FPA scholarship still focuses on the United States – the next step in further testing the explanatory potential of the poliheuristic theory would seem to be

⁷ Baumann, Rainer, and Frank A. Stengel. “Foreign policy analysis, globalization and non-state actors: state-centric after all?” *Journal of International Relations and Development* 17.4 (2014): 489-521.

⁸ Brulé, David J. “Explaining and Forecasting Leaders’ Decisions: A Poliheuristic Analysis of the Iran Hostage Rescue Decision.” *International Studies Perspectives* 6.1 (2005). P. 99

⁹ Stern, Eric. “Contextualizing and Critiquing the Poliheuristic Theory.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48.1 (2004). P. 120

to investigate if the same is true for this research program. If this were to be the case, further testing would benefit from identifying some uncharted territory to which the theory's application can be extended. Two of the most recent and arguably comprehensive appraisals of the poliheuristic research program have been conducted by Brulé in 2008¹⁰ and by Opperman in 2014¹¹. In addition, one of the main poliheuristic theorists, Alex Mintz have regularly provided overviews of how the poliheuristic theory has been applied in the analysis of foreign policy and national security decisions.¹² These appraisals and overviews again demonstrate the width of the poliheuristic research program. Examples of how the theory has been applied in the analysis of decision-making by leaders ranging from U.S. Presidents, to leaders of countries in Latin America, the Middle East, Asia, and Europe are plentiful and readily available. There are examples of the theory being applied to the study of decisions made by leaders of democratic governments, by leaders of autocratic regimes, and as previously mentioned, by leaders of non-state armed groups. The issues studied range from more common issues in the FPA literatures, such as the use or non-use of force, to the influence of advisors in decision-making, international negotiations, and environmental policy, to mention a few. However, one subject that, with a limited number of expectations, has received no systematic attention is the study of foreign policy decision-making in small states.¹³ It appears that this is a gap in the poliheuristic literature and, thus, that this paper could serve as a contribution to this end.

The concept of a small state, as Björkdahl has pointed out, is fluid. Normally, smallness is defined in relation to power capabilities, understood in a more traditional

¹⁰ Brulé, David J. "The Poliheuristic Research Program: An Assessment and Suggestions for Further Progress." *International Studies Review* 10 (2008): 266-293.

¹¹ Opperman, Kai. "Delineating the Scope Conditions of the Poliheuristic Theory of Foreign Policy Decision Making: The Noncompensatory Principle and the Domestic Salience of Foreign Policy." *Foreign Policy Analysis* 10.1 (2014): 23-41.

¹² See for example, Mintz, Alex. "How Do Leaders Make Decisions? A Poliheuristic perspective" *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48.3 (2004): 3-13., and Redd, Steven B., and Alex Mintz. "Policy Perspectives on National Security and Foreign Policy Decision Making." *The Policy Studies Journal* 41.S1 (2013): S11-S37.

¹³ For an exception, thought not explicitly a poliheuristic analysis, see Doeser, Fredrik. "Domestic politics and foreign policy change in small states: The fall of the Danish 'footnote policy'." *Cooperation and Conflict* 46.2 (2011): 222-241.

IR sense as military and economic capabilities.¹⁴ Countries with big power capabilities, often referred to as great powers, have traditionally been the focus of the IR literature.

Proponents of the poliheuristic theory's explanatory potential in foreign policy decision-making claims that domestic politics is the 'essence of decision', and that policy options are evaluated based on their political ramifications above all else.¹⁵ As such, this premise should apply to decision-making in small states as well.

To identify a case for a first test of poliheuristic theory in a small state that has the potential of being both interesting and challenging, it seems that an appropriate initial criterion for selection is that the state would place a strong emphasis on a different dimension or set of dimensions than domestic political ramifications, thus providing a challenge for the theory's main contention. As Doeser has pointed out in his discussion of the small state literature, small states generally place particular importance on international law, and through it the institutionalization of interstate relationships, as it levels the playing field on the international arena and makes traditional power capabilities matter less.¹⁶ Thus, a state that places such importance on international law as a key dimension for making foreign policy decisions should provide a challenging case.

With its tradition of consecutive governments, from different ends of the ideological spectrum, emphasizing the importance of upholding international law, and drawing on this as a standard for foreign policy activities, Sweden is such a state. Furthermore, in what can be considered a major, if not *the* major area of foreign policy decision-making, participation in international peacekeeping and peace enforcing mission, the country has a long tradition of contributing personnel and resources, with the aim of maintaining international law and international peace and security.¹⁷ A recent case

¹⁴ Björkdahl, Annika. "Ideas and Norms in Swedish Peace Policy." *Swiss Political Science Review* 19.3 (2013): 322-337.

¹⁵ Redd, Steven B., and Alex Mintz. "Policy Perspectives on National Security and Foreign Policy Decision Making." *The Policy Studies Journal* 41.S1 (2013). P. S17

¹⁶ Doeser, Fredrik. "Sweden's Libya Decision: A Case of Humanitarian Intervention." *International Politics* 51.2 (2014). P. 198

¹⁷ Government report. Regeringens skrivelse 2007/08:51. Nationell strategi för deltagande i internationell freds- och säkerhetsfrämjande verksamhet. 2008.

that, at a surface level, seems to follow in this tradition is Sweden's participation in the enforcement of the no-fly zone over Libya in 2011. It follows in the Swedish tradition, yet also has at least two notable features. First, Sweden was the only country to participate in the operation that was not a member of either the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), who led the operation, or the League of Arab States (LAS).¹⁸ Second, the operation entailed the first international deployment of Swedish combat aircraft since the 1960s.¹⁹ As such, and particularly given that it seemingly follows in the footsteps of tradition that emphasizes a different key dimension for decisions, the Swedish participation in the operation to enforce the no-fly zone provides an interesting test for poliheuristic theory, and will be this paper's object of analysis.

In sum, the main purpose of this paper is to conduct a first test of the explanatory potential of poliheuristic theory in a previously unexplored context, the foreign policy decision-making in small states. To do this, the paper will explore the following overarching research question:

Can the poliheuristic theory of foreign policy decision-making explain Sweden's decision to participate in the UN-mandated operation to enforce the no-fly zone over Libya in 2011?

The specific hypotheses that this paper seeks to test will be presented in Chapter 2 and further operationalized in Chapter 3. The structure of this paper is laid out in the outline below.

1.3 Outline

This paper will proceed as follows. In Chapter 2, the main features of the poliheuristic theory of foreign policy decision-making will be presented and hypotheses for testing will be derived. Chapter 3 will present the research design of the paper. First, Causal Process Tracing will be introduced as the main method for the examination undertaken in this paper, and its usefulness for a theory-testing study will be

¹⁸ Ibid. P. 196

¹⁹ Egnell, Robert. *The Swedish Experience in Operation Unified Protector*. Stockholm: Stockholm Center for Strategic Studies, 2012. P. 4

highlighted. Second, the material that constitutes the basis for the analysis of the case will be introduced and discussed. Third, the hypotheses and causal mechanisms that this paper seeks to test will be operationalized. Fourth, the key limitations of this paper will be discussed. Chapter 4 will then present the narrative of the Swedish decision to participate in the no-fly zone mission over Libya, and in Chapter 5, the decision will be analyzed in relation to the hypotheses that the paper seeks to test. Chapter 6 will summarize the findings, present the conclusions of the paper, and some suggestions for further research.

Chapter 2 – Theory

In this chapter, the main features and contentions of the poliheuristic theory will be further introduced and discussed. It will also introduce the two main hypotheses that can be derived from the poliheuristic theory.

2.1 Poliheuristic Theory

“Poliheuristic theory combines elements of rational choice theory with cognitive approaches to decision making. As such, it can account for both the outcomes and the processes of foreign and national security decision making. Decision makers use multiple heuristics en route to choice in response to both cognitive constraints and situational factors, such as time pressure, information overload, etc. The theory also emphasizes the political calculation that policymakers often face, arguing that political calculations are often noncompensatory considerations, i.e. other factors cannot compensate, or override, the political dimension. Finally, according to poliheuristic theory, decision makers tend to process information in two stages, with the first stage focusing on heuristics and cognitive shortcuts, and the second stage being more analytical in nature.”²⁰

The summary above paints a helpful picture of the key features of the poliheuristic theory: the combination of different decision strategies in a two stage process of

²⁰ Redd, Steven B., and Alex Mintz. “Policy Perspectives on National Security and Foreign Policy Decision Making.” *The Policy Studies Journal* 41.S1 (2013). P. S29

decision-making, a dimension-based processing of different options, the use of noncompensatory decision rules, and the primacy of domestic political calculations for foreign policy decision-making. These characteristics, along with some of the other main elements of poliheuristic theory, are discussed below.²¹

At the core of the poliheuristic theory's model of decision-making is the two-stage process, and the use of different decision rules in the two different stages. This distinguishes poliheuristic theory from one of the main theories of foreign policy decision-making, expected utility theory, as the latter assumes that a single decision rule is adopted for any decision task, and this decision rule is kept throughout the entire task.²² Instead, poliheuristic theory suggests that, when facing a decision situation, policy makers first use one or more simplifying heuristics (cognitive shortcuts) to eliminate alternatives that are unacceptable in relation to a critical dimension or criterion. As such, the poliheuristic theory assumes that decision-making is nonholistic/nonexhaustive. In holistic decision-making, all aspects of all alternatives are compared and evaluated before a decision is made. Such a decision process is both cognitively demanding as well as time consuming, and poliheuristic theory assumes that factors such as stress, task complexity, incomplete information and familiarity (or lack thereof) with different situations and policy alternatives means that a holistic decision-making process is not employed until the set of alternatives has been reduced to a more manageable number.²³ In the second stage, policy makers select one of the remaining alternatives seeking to maximize benefits and minimize risks.²⁴

According to poliheuristic theory, and as indicated above, decision-makers consider different alternatives in a decision situation in relation to a set of key dimensions. A

²¹ Mintz, Alex, and Nehemia Geva. The Poliheuristic Theory of Foreign Policy Decisionmaking. In *Decision making on War and Peace: The cognitive-rational debate*, edited by Nehemia Geva and Alex Mintz, 81-101. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1997.

²² Redd, Steven B. "The Influence of Advisers on Foreign Policy Decision Making: An Experimental Study." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 46.3 (2002). P. 337

²³ Mintz, Alex, and Nehemia Geva. The Poliheuristic Theory of Foreign Policy Decisionmaking. In *Decision making on War and Peace: The cognitive-rational debate*, edited by Nehemia Geva and Alex Mintz, 81-101. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1997. P. 82-85. See also, Redd, Steven B. "The Influence of Advisers on Foreign Policy Decision Making: An Experimental Study." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 46.3 (2002). P. 336-338.

²⁴ Mintz, Alex. "How Do Leaders Make Decisions? A Poliheuristic perspective" *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48.3 (2004). P. 6-7.

dimension can be considered as an organizing theme for a set of variables, information, and implications relevant to the decision.²⁵ In the literature, this is referred to as a dimension-based processing, and stands in contrast to an alternative-based search for a decision. In an alternative-based search, “the decision maker considers the implications for a given alternative across all dimensions before moving on to the next alternative.”²⁶ Instead, poliheuristic theory envisions that the decision makers identifies one dimension that is more important than the others, and that all alternatives that fails to meet a certain threshold level on this dimension are discarded. Furthermore, poliheuristic theory asserts that this key dimension is noncompensatory. In other words, failure to meet the threshold on the key dimension cannot be compensated for by an expected high value or output on another dimension. Brulé provides a helpful illustration of the noncompensatory principle through the example of purchasing a car. Among the relevant dimensions that a prospective buyer will consider when deciding on which car to get are cost, size, comfort and performance. For most people, the cost dimension will be noncompensatory. The cars that the prospective buyer cannot afford will be eliminated from the set of options, and more attractive features on the other dimensions (e.g. a big luggage compartment, fast acceleration, or luxury seats) cannot compensate for the buyer not being able to afford those vehicles.²⁷ In foreign policy decision-making, the relevant dimensions for decision makers are often (though of course not always limited to) thought of as military, economic, diplomatic, and political considerations.²⁸

Finally, and maybe most important for the analysis of foreign policy decision-making, poliheuristic theory argues that the key, noncompensatory dimension of foreign policy decision-making is domestic politics. As Mintz argues: “Policy makers are political actors whose self-interest in political survival is paramount. Consequently, policy makers are likely to reject outright any alternative that poses potentially very high political costs, even if that same alternative also yields potentially high benefits on

²⁵ Brulé, David J. “The Poliheuristic Research Program: An Assessment and Suggestions for Further Progress.” *International Studies Review* 10 (2008). P. 268-269.

²⁶ Ibid. P. 268

²⁷ Ibid. P. 269

²⁸ See for example, Sirin, Cigdem V. “Examining the role of identity in negotiation decision making: the case of Cyprus.” *International Journal of Conflict Management* 22.4 (2012). P. 416-417. or Kinne, Brandon J. “Decision Making in Autocratic Regimes: A Poliheuristic Perspective.” *International Studies Perspectives* 6.1 (2005). P. 115

other dimensions.”²⁹ In addition to identifying domestic politics and political survival as the key dimension of foreign policy decision-making, the above quote also gives an indication about another important aspect of poliheuristic theory: it assumes that loss aversion outweighs all other considerations and that decision makers are driven more by a wish to avoid failure than to attain success when considering policy options based on the political dimension.³⁰

2.2 Hypotheses

From the discussion of the theory above, it follows that (at least) two main hypotheses can be derived from poliheuristic theory:³¹

H1: Only politically acceptable options will survive consideration at stage one of decision-making.

H2: Remaining options are evaluated across a more diverse set of dimensions and a final decision is made that seeks to maximize benefits and minimize risks.

These hypotheses will be tested in the following chapters of this paper. The specific way in which these hypotheses are operationalized and tested will be explained in Chapter 3, as well as how they can be refuted and falsified.

Chapter 3 – Research Design

This chapter will present the research design of this paper. First, it will discuss Casual Process Tracing and highlight why this method is suited for the type of investigation undertaken in this paper. Second, it will return to the general hypotheses derived from poliheuristic theory that were presented in Chapter 2, identify the causal mechanisms that they predict, and operationalize the empirical proxies, in other words the

²⁹ Mintz, Alex. “How Do Leaders Make Decisions? A Poliheuristic perspective” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48.3 (2004). P. 7

³⁰ Redd, Steven B. “The Influence of Advisers on Foreign Policy Decision Making: An Experimental Study.” *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 46.3 (2002). P. 337

³¹ These draw on the study by Sandal, et al. how identified similar hypotheses for their study of crisis decision-making in China and Turkey. See Sandal, Nukhet A., Enyu Zhang, Carolyn C. James, and Patrick James. “Poliheuristic Theory and Crisis Decision Making: A Comparative Analysis of Turkey with China. *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 44.1 (2011): 27-57.

observations that would be expected to be found if a hypothesized mechanism is present or absent in the particular case.³² Third, it will discuss the sources that the analysis in the following chapters is based upon. Fourth, with reference to the literature on process tracing, on case study research more broadly and on poliheuristic theory, some of the key limitations of this paper will be identified and discussed.

3.1 Method – Process Tracing

Over the last few decades, Causal Process Tracing (CPT) has achieved increasing recognition by social scientists, and it has been used widely as a method of studying causal inference in research that draws on some form of case study design.³³ Some scholars have gone so far as to suggest that CPT is the “most important tool of casual inference in qualitative and case study research.”³⁴ However, whereas the CPT method has seen widespread use and been the subject of much discussion, many scholars also point out that studies that claim to employ process tracing often suffer from inadequate specification of how the method is understood and used, and that the procedures involved are not specified clearly.³⁵ This lack of clarity is likely a consequence of both the diversity of understanding of CPT that exists in the academic community as well as a previous absence of adequate explanation of the approach. In an attempt to avoid this pitfall, the following section seeks to identify how this paper understands and employs CPT.

The first point of clarification to highlight is the different variants of CPT that is identified in the literature. Generally, they can be divided into two main categories: case-centric and theory-centric CPT.³⁶ In case-centric CPT, as Beach and Pedersen

³² Kay, Adrian, and Philip Baker. “What Can Casual Process Tracing Offer to Policy Studies? A review of the Literature.” *The Policy Studies Journal* 43.1 (2015). P. 11-12.

³³ See for example, Beach, Derek, and Rasmus Pedersen. *Process-Tracing Methods: Foundations and Guidelines*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2013; George, Alexander L., and Andrew Bennett. *Case studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005; and, Kay, Adrian, and Philip Baker. “What Can Casual Process Tracing Offer to Policy Studies? A review of the Literature.” *The Policy Studies Journal* 43.1 (2015): 1-21.

³⁴ Mahoney, James. “The Logic of Process Tracing Tests in the Social Sciences.” *Sociological Methods & Research* 41.4 (2012). P. 571

³⁵ Ibid. P. 572. See also, Blatter, Joachim, and Markus Haverland. “Case Studies and (Causal-) Process Tracing.” In *Comparative Policy Studies: Conceptual and Methodological Challenges*, edited by Isabelle Engeli and Christine Rothmayr Allison, 59-84. Houndsmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014. P. 63

³⁶ Kay, Adrian, and Philip Baker. “What Can Casual Process Tracing Offer to Policy Studies? A review of the Literature.” *The Policy Studies Journal* 43.1 (2015). P. 6

have argued, the overall purpose “is to establish an explanation for why an outcome has been produced in a specific case.”³⁷ They continue to point out that researchers using case-centric CPT see the world as “very complex, multi-factored and extremely context-specific” and that “this complexity makes the ambition of producing knowledge that can be generalized across cases difficult, if not impossible”.³⁸ This understanding of the social world, and the underlying philosophical understanding of science, stands in contrast to the theory-centric variants of CPT, which can be further divided into theory-building and theory-testing CPT. In short, these can be distinguished by their different analytical ambitions. In theory building CPT, the ambition is to develop a theoretical explanation from the empirical evidence of a particular case, by asking, “what is the causal mechanism between X (independent variable) and Y (outcome)?”³⁹ In theory-testing CPT, the purpose is instead to test whether there is evidence that a hypothesized casual mechanism derived from existing theory is present in a given case and that it functions as theorized.⁴⁰

As the ambition of this paper is to investigate whether the predictions about the decision-making process made in poliheuristic theory are found in the investigated case, it naturally follows that a theory-testing CPT approach will be employed. To be sure, George and Bennett have provided a helpful threshold for when a theory-testing approach could be used, which generally seems to be accepted by other researchers. They write: “If a theory is sufficiently developed that it generates or implies predictions about casual processes that lead to outcomes, then process-tracing can assess the predictions of the theory. In this use, process-tracing evidence tests whether the observed processes among variables in a case match those predicted or implied by the theory.”⁴¹ As highlighted in previous chapters, the poliheuristic theory advances a fairly prescriptive model of decision-making, in relation to the two-stage process, to the different decision rules employed in the different stages, and to the noncompensatory nature of the key (domestic politics) dimension of the decision

³⁷ Beach, Derek, and Rasmus Pedersen. “Case selection techniques in Process-tracing and the implications of taking the study of causal mechanisms seriously.” *APSA 2012 Annual Meeting Paper* (2012). P. 9

³⁸ *Ibid.* P. 8

³⁹ *Ibid.* P. 10

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* P. 9

⁴¹ George, Alexander L., and Andrew Bennett. *Case studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005. P. 217

makers. Thus, it is reasonable to argue that the poliheuristic theory passes George and Bennett's threshold, and that a theory-testing CPT approach is possible.

The second clarification relates to the way casual mechanisms are understood, which has also been the subject of diverse opinions within the academic community. This paper adopts the 'mechanismic' understanding of causal mechanisms put forward by Beach and Pedersen, among others. According to this understanding, causal mechanisms should be conceptualized as a 'system that transmits causal forces from X to produce Y'.⁴² Put differently, a casual mechanism is composed of a series of parts in a 'machine' that together produces Y. Each part is individually insufficient to produce Y, yet all are necessary components of the mechanism that produces Y. The parts, in turn, are understood as entities engaging in activities. As Beach and Pedersen put it:

“Entities are what engages in activities (the parts of the mechanism, i.e. toothed wheels), where the activities are the producers of change or what transmits causal forces through a mechanism (the movement of the wheels). Entities can be individual persons, groups, states, or structural factors depending upon the level of the theory. It is important to note that the theoretical conceptualization of the entities includes nouns and the activities include verbs that are the ‘transmitters’ of causality through the mechanism.”⁴³

This understanding differs from those who conceptualize a casual mechanism as a series of intervening variables, as seen in King, et al, as well as the configurational understanding of causal mechanism advanced by Blatter and Haverland.⁴⁴ A more in-depth discussion of different conceptualizations of causal mechanisms is beyond the scope of this paper. For now, it will simply be noted that the strength of the 'mechanismic' understanding of casual mechanisms, and thus the rationale for

⁴² Beach, Derek, and Rasmus Pedersen. "What is Process-Tracing Actually Tracing? Three Variant of Process Tracing Methods and Their Uses and Limitations." *APSA 2011 Annual Meeting Paper* (2011). P. 8-9.

⁴³ Ibid. P. 8

⁴⁴ King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994; and, Blatter, Joachim, and Markus Haverland. "Case Studies and (Causal-) Process Tracing." In *Comparative Policy Studies: Conceptual and Methodological Challenges*, edited by Isabelle Engeli and Christine Rothmayr Allison, 59-84. Houndsmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014.

drawing on it in the design of this paper, is that by explicitly identifying *how* the hypothesized mechanism produces the outcome (Y), it is possible to make a strong claim that the mechanism *is present* in the first place and functions as hypothesized (if the evidence found in the case supports this).⁴⁵

The third clarification relates to counterfactual reasoning. As Kay and Baker have argued, “a theory is more powerful when it states the counterfactual – what is hypothesized to happen if the theory is null. Careful specification of the null hypothesis alongside each hypothesis is another step policy scholars using CPT should consider.”⁴⁶ This paper will heed to this advice when specifying the casual mechanisms below, as it both strengthens the claims that can be made about a hypothesized mechanism as well as allows for the possibility of multiple alternative pathways to an outcome (equifinality).

The fourth relates to the process of conducting CPT. Kay and Baker have again provided some useful guidance, by outlining a three-step approach.⁴⁷

- 1) Theorizing variables and empirical proxies.
- 2) Collecting diagnostic evidence
- 3) Hypotheses testing

The remainder of this paper is structured based on these steps. Below, the variables and casual mechanisms predicted by poliheuristic theory are identified and the expected observations are specified. In Chapter 4, a case illustration is provided to present collected diagnostic evidence. The presentation of diagnostic evidence is continued in the analysis in Chapter 5, where the hypothesized causal mechanisms are tested by analyzing whether the expected observations are present or not.⁴⁸ Furthermore, there should be a clear temporal relationship between the expected observations in the causal mechanism. In other words, it should be clear that a change

⁴⁵ Beach, Derek, and Rasmus Pedersen. “What is Process-Tracing Actually Tracing? Three Variant of Process Tracing Methods and Their Uses and Limitations.” *APSA 2011 Annual Meeting Paper* (2011). P. 9

⁴⁶ Kay, Adrian, and Philip Baker. “What Can Casual Process Tracing Offer to Policy Studies? A review of the Literature.” *The Policy Studies Journal* 43.1 (2015). P. 11

⁴⁷ Kay, Adrian, and Philip Baker. “What Can Casual Process Tracing Offer to Policy Studies? A review of the Literature.” *The Policy Studies Journal* 43.1 (2015). P. 11-18.

⁴⁸ Beach, Derek, and Rasmus Pedersen. “What is Process-Tracing Actually Tracing? Three Variant of Process Tracing Methods and Their Uses and Limitations.” *APSA 2011 Annual Meeting Paper* (2011). P. 13

on the dependent variable is preceded in time by a change in the independent variable, and that the same temporal relationship is true for the different links in the causal mechanism.⁴⁹

Before proceeding, it is also important to discuss some possible alternative methodological approaches to the type of study that this paper seeks to undertake. First, it is hopefully made clear in the description above why the theory-testing variant of CPT is employed in this paper. The purpose is to conduct a structured test of the predictions made by poliheuristic theory, not to build new theories, or to seek to explain the specific outcome of the case through a combination of different theoretical mechanisms and other mechanism without explicit support in a theory. Second, other methods, both qualitative and quantitative, could of course also be considered. Two of the more common approaches to policy research, large-N statistical studies and comparative case-studies, could arguably be employed to study poliheuristic theory. There are two main reasons as to why this paper has chosen to not use these approaches. The first one relates to the research tradition within poliheuristic theory. With a few notable exceptions, most poliheuristic research has focused on the type of within-case analysis found in this paper.⁵⁰ As this paper constitute the first attempt to test poliheuristic theory in the context of foreign policy decision-making in a small state, it seems that the best opportunity for a first comparison of results with other poliheuristic studies and basis for suggestions for future research is established by using the field's main approach to research. The second reason relates to the ability to explain the policy making process and assess the predictions of poliheuristic theory. As Blatter and Haverland has noted in their review of different examples of CPT, "public policy outcomes cannot be fully explained by just focusing on independent and dependent variables as large-N studies and the comparative case-study methods do."⁵¹ Thus, and again particularly for a first exploration of poliheuristic theory in a new context, it seems appropriate to draw on a method that allows a relatively high

⁴⁹ For an example of a similar way of making claims about validity, see Doerer, Fredrik. "Sweden's Libya Decision: A Case of Humanitarian Intervention." *International Politics* 51.2 (2014): 196-213.

⁵⁰ For overviews, see for example: Mintz, Alex. "How Do Leaders Make Decisions? A Poliheuristic perspective" *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48.3 (2004): 3-13; and, Brulé, David J. "The Poliheuristic Research Program: An Assessment and Suggestions for Further Progress." *International Studies Review* 10 (2008): 266-293.

⁵¹ Blatter, Joachim, and Markus Haverland. "Case Studies and (Causal-) Process Tracing." In *Comparative Policy Studies: Conceptual and Methodological Challenges*, edited by Isabelle Engeli and Christine Rothmayr Allison, 59-84. Houndsmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014. P. 75

degree of confidence in assessing if the policy-making process functions as predicted by the theory. Based on the literature, it seems that CPT provides such an avenue. Lastly, and with both points above in mind, it should be noted that neither the scholars of CPT that this paper draws upon, nor the orientation of this paper in and of itself, are methodological purists. Mixed-methods designs and approaches are highlighted by all researchers that this paper has studied, as all recognize the complexity of policy processes and the requisite need to study policy making from multiple, complementary angles. Such approaches will undoubtedly be appropriate in additional study of poliheuristic theory and small states, and recommendations for such future research will be made in the concluding chapter of this paper after the analysis has been conducted. Again, the fact that this paper favors a more narrow methodological approach is founded on the new context in which the theory is applied, and the desire to be able to make a robust test of the theory's explanatory potential.

3.2 Theorizing Variables and Empirical Proxies

This paper now returns to the two general hypotheses introduced in Chapter 2 in order to specify the independent and dependent variables, and to conceptualize a plausible causal mechanism that is thought to be necessary for the mechanism to produce the theorized outcome.⁵²

3.2.1 Operationalizing Hypothesis One

H1: Only politically acceptable options will survive consideration at stage one of decision-making.

As a starting point, Mintz has provided a number of possible ways to operationalize the noncompensatory political loss variable in poliheuristic theory that specifies why decision makers will reject a given alternative based on the domestic political dimension of the decision. They are:

- Threat to a leader's survival

⁵² Beach, Derek, and Rasmus Brun Pedersen. "What is Process-Tracing Actually Tracing? Three Variant of Process Tracing Methods and Their Uses and Limitations." APSA 2011 Annual Meeting Paper (2011). Accessed October 28, 2015. <http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1902082> P. 7-8.

- Significant drop in public support for a policy
- Significant drop in popularity
- The prospects of an electoral defeat
- Domestic opposition
- Threat to regime survival
- Intraparty rivalry and competition
- Internal or external challenge to the regime
- Potential collapse of the coalition, government, or regime
- Threat to political power, dignity, honor, or legitimacy of a leader
- Demonstrations, riots, and so forth
- The existence of veto players (e.g., pivotal parties in parliamentary government)⁵³

Based on the tests commonly found in poliheuristic literature, as well as what is known about the Swedish system of government and how foreign policy is made, two variables will be selected for operationalization in the investigation: low public support for a given policy option, and low support from political parties in parliament.⁵⁴

Table 1 specifies the causal mechanism whereby low public support for a policy option produces its rejection by decision-makers, and the case-specific expected observations.

⁵³ Mintz, Alex. "How Do Leaders Make Decisions? A Poliheuristic perspective" *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48.3 (2004). P. 9

⁵⁴ These are two of the most common tests in poliheuristic research, both in situations where a single leader has the ability to make the final decision and when the final decision is made by a group, as is the case in many parliamentary systems. For an overview, see: Brulé, David J. "The Poliheuristic Research Program: An Assessment and Suggestions for Further Progress." *International Studies Review* 10 (2008): 266-293. For specific uses, see for example: Brulé, David J. "Explaining and Forecasting Leaders' Decisions: A Poliheuristic Analysis of the Iran Hostage Rescue Decision." *International Studies Perspectives* 6.1 (2005): 99-113; Redd, Steven B. "The Influence of Advisers and Decision Strategies on Foreign Policy Choices: President Clinton's Decision to Use Force in Kosovo." *International Studies Perspectives* 6.1 (2005): 129-150; and, Opperman, Kai. "Delineating the Scope Conditions of the Poliheuristic Theory of Foreign Policy Decision Making: The Noncompensatory Principle and the Domestic Salience of Foreign Policy." *Foreign Policy Analysis* 10.1 (2014): 23-41.

Table 1 - The low public support causal mechanism

Poliheuristic theory	Expected observations
<p><i>Independent variable:</i> Low public support for a policy option.</p>	<p>Credible national public opinion polls showing low support of option.</p> <p>Significant mass demonstrations/protests showing low support of option.</p>
<p><i>Part 1 of causal mechanism:</i> Decision maker(s) observe level of public support.</p>	<p>The Swedish government demonstrates awareness of public support through statements, speeches, interviews, or other public or private communication.</p>
<p><i>Part 2 of causal mechanism:</i> Decision maker(s) will assess low public support of a policy option as a political risk or constraining factor.</p>	<p>The Swedish government assesses low public support for a policy option as a risk or constraining factor.</p>
<p><i>Outcome:</i> Decision maker(s) eliminate the policy option from alternatives under consideration.</p>	<p>The Swedish government eliminates policy option from consideration.</p>

Table 2 specifies the causal mechanism whereby low support from political parties in parliament for a policy option produces its rejection by decision-makers, and the case-specific expected observations.

Table 2 – The low parliamentary support causal mechanism

Poliheuristic theory	Expected observations
<p><i>Independent variable:</i> Low support from political parties in parliament for a policy option.</p>	<p>Political parties express low support of policy option through statements, speeches, or other public communication.</p>
<p><i>Part 1 of causal mechanism:</i> Decision maker(s) observes level of support from political parties in parliament.</p>	<p>The Swedish government demonstrates awareness of parliamentary support through statements, speeches, interviews, or other public or private communication.</p>

<p><i>Part 2 of causal mechanism:</i> Decision maker(s) will assess low parliamentary support of a policy option as a political risk or constraining factor.</p>	<p>The Swedish government assesses low parliamentary support of a policy option as a political risk or constraining factor.</p>
<p><i>Outcome:</i> Decision maker(s) eliminate the policy option from alternatives under consideration.</p>	<p>The Swedish government eliminates policy option from consideration.</p>

The first hypothesis is confirmed if the evidence presented in the following chapters reveals that the political dimension, as operationalized above, takes precedence at the first stage of decision-making and is noncompensatory. For the hypothesis to be falsified, the observations from the case must demonstrate that choices were made with consideration of another dimension, for example military, diplomatic or economic, or with comprehensive consideration of all dimensions, thus indicating either that the domestic political dimension is not the key noncompensatory dimension or that the decision is made by a compensatory decision rule.⁵⁵

3.2.2 Operationalizing Hypothesis Two

H2: Remaining options are evaluated across a more diverse set of dimensions and a final decision is made that seeks to maximize benefits and minimize risks.

The second hypothesis was derived from poliheuristic theory's proposition that decision makers considers a diverse set of dimensions before making a final decision, and that the final decision is made with the intention of maximizing benefits and minimizing risks. The domestic political dimension could still be one of the dimensions considered, however it is no longer noncompensatory, more important than others, or necessarily loss averse. As mentioned earlier, other consideration common in foreign policy decision-making are military, economic and diplomatic dimensions.

⁵⁵ For the use of similar criteria in the poliheuristic literature, see Sandal, Nukhet A., Enyu Zhang, Carolyn C. James, and Patrick James. "Poliheuristic Theory and Crisis Decision Making: A Comparative Analysis of Turkey with China. *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 44.1 (2011): 27-57.

Table 3 – The multiple dimensions causal mechanism

Poliheuristic theory	Expected observations
<p><i>Independent variable:</i> Policy options are considered along a diverse set of dimensions.</p>	<p>At least two policy options remain after the first stage of decision-making.⁵⁶</p>
<p><i>Part 1 of causal mechanism:</i> Decision maker(s) consider a policy option along military, diplomatic, economic, political, or other relevant dimensions for the decision.</p>	<p>The Swedish government demonstrates that more than one dimension of a policy option is considered through speeches, statements, interviews, or other public or private communication.</p>
<p><i>Part 2 of causal mechanism:</i> Decision maker(s) consider a policy option along military, diplomatic, economic, political, or other relevant dimensions for the decision.⁵⁷</p>	<p>The Swedish government demonstrates that more than one dimension of a policy option is considered through speeches, statements, interviews, or other public or private communication.</p>
<p><i>Outcome:</i> Decision maker(s) make a final decision about a policy option based on an assessment of its utility along multiple dimensions and implement it.⁵⁸</p>	<p>The Swedish government makes a final decision about a policy option and implements it.</p>

For this hypothesis to be confirmed, the evidence should demonstrate that the final decision in stage two is made along a more diverse set of dimensions. To falsify the hypothesis, the evidence should show that the final decision still is made along one noncompensatory dimension.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ In theory, there could of course only be one remaining option left after all politically damaging options have been ruled out in stage one of decision-making. The poliheuristic theory does not explicitly foreclose this option, however, given its emphasis on a two-stage process of decision-making and the use of a separate decision rule in stage two, it is strongly implied in the literature that the decision maker still has a choice to make at this stage, even if only between option A and not A.

⁵⁷ There could be as many parts of this causal mechanism as there are remaining policy options.

⁵⁸ In reality, the final decision could also include a combination of policy options that are seen as compatible.

⁵⁹ Again, for similar understanding, see Sandal, Nukhet A., Enyu Zhang, Carolyn C. James, and Patrick James. "Poliheuristic Theory and Crisis Decision Making: A Comparative Analysis of Turkey with China. *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 44.1 (2011): 27-57.

3.3 Materials

The evidence presented in the following case illustration and analysis is based on a variety of different sources, including news articles, parliamentary records, government bills, statements and remarks made by key individuals, and secondary sources including academic articles about the case. One possible shortcoming of the source material is that it does not include interviews with key decision-makers conducted by the author. In an attempt to mitigate this, the paper draws on both interviews with key actors in media as well as interviews conducted by other scholars.

3.4 Limitations

As with any study, and maybe particularly so with a study focused on a previously little explored issue, there are number of possible limitations to this paper.

From a methodological point of view, it is important to note that an implication of a within-case research design means that any claims of the existence of the hypothesized relationship found in the analysis will be limited to the case investigated.⁶⁰ Another potential limitation that could affect the results of the analysis is that the mechanistic understanding of the casual mechanism assumes a level of ability for rational behavior on part of the decision-maker. In other words, the causal mechanisms, particularly in the first stage of decision-making, make the assumption that the decision-maker will be able to correctly assess both public and political party opinion. Many theories of decision-making point out cognitive and situational limitations of information processing for both individuals and groups, for example, stress, limited computational ability, limited memory, etc.⁶¹ Overcoming this potential limitations likely requires further research specifically focused on such factors. For this paper, it could be argued that the operation of the casual mechanism is not necessarily dependent on the *correct* assessment of public or parliamentary opinion, but rather on *an* assessment is made and then acted upon, whether correct in its perception or not.

⁶⁰ For a discussion of this, see Kay, Adrian, and Philip Baker. "What Can Casual Process Tracing Offer to Policy Studies? A review of the Literature." *The Policy Studies Journal* 43.1 (2015). 1-21.

⁶¹ For an overview (see specifically cybernetic theory): Redd, Steven B., and Alex Mintz. "Policy Perspectives on National Security and Foreign Policy Decision Making." *The Policy Studies Journal* 41.S1 (2013): S11-S37.

In relation to the empirical evidence that this paper is based upon, two limitations are important to acknowledge, in addition to the aforementioned lack of interviews conducted by the author. First, the case is fairly recent, meaning that it is possible that some key evidence, for example detailed protocols of government meetings, personal journal entries of key decision-makers, etc., possibly are still to be made available to the public. Second, decision-making in issues related to use of force and deployment of military resources could be considered a 'secretive affair' *per se* and therefore, key accounts of the decision-making process could be unavailable and publicly stated reasons behind decisions could intentionally be ambiguous, if not misleading. To mitigate these limitations, in so far as it is possible, the paper draws on a variety of different primary and secondary sources, as described above.⁶²

A final limitation that has been highlighted in the literature on poliheuristic theory relates to the case selection of this paper. Whereas the introduction of this paper demonstrated why the Swedish decision to participate in Operation Unified Protector is a useful case for a first test of poliheuristic theory in the context of foreign policy-making in a small state, it should also be noted that it falls within a category of cases that could be seen as more favorable to confirm the predictions of poliheuristic theory. Oppermann provides a strong case for this argument in his discussion of scope conditions and poliheuristic theory. In short, Oppermann argues that if an issue is highly salient to the domestic audience, a policy option that is not favored by the domestic audience comes with a higher political cost to the decision maker, which in turn makes the operation of the noncompensatory political dimension of decision-making more likely as the decision-makers is risk averse and seeks to avoid high political costs. He effectively demonstrates this in a study of the foreign policy decision-making of the British government, where he points out that it was more restricted by the domestic audience when faced with a high salience issue versus a low salience issues. This is an important observation, and should be the subject of further study in research on poliheuristic theory in general, as well as on any future research into the theory's applicability in small states. By Oppermann's standards, and by the wider literature on poliheuristic theory, situations such as the one studied

⁶² For a similar discussion of limitations of source material, see Brummer, Klaus. "The Reluctant Peacekeeper: Governmental Politics and Germany's Participation in EUFOR RD Congo." *Foreign Policy Analysis* 9.1 (2013). P. 3

in this paper – the decision to deploy military force internationally – is most likely a highly salient issue. Thus, if the hypotheses are confirmed in the analysis, it is important that future research proceeds to more challenging cases as well as seeks to further specify the scope condition of poliheuristic theory.⁶³

Chapter 4 – Case Illustration

4.1 Introduction

On April 7, 2011 Swedish combat aircraft took off from the Sigonella Air Base in Italy for their first mission to support the enforcement of the UN sanctioned no-fly zone over Libya. It was the first combat deployment of the Swedish Air Force since the 1960s.⁶⁴ The operation was led by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and named Operation Unified Protector (OUP). Over the next seven months, Swedish fighter jets, the JAS 39C Gripen, flew over 570 missions and recorded over 1700 flight hours. The Swedish operation included both Defensive Counter Air (DCA) and Tactical Air Reconnaissance (TAR) operations to defend the no-fly zone and, in the second rotation of the mission after the political mandate from the Swedish Parliament had been renewed, TAR operations that supported the full range of the UN mandate, which also included the enforcement of an arms embargo and the protection of Libyan civilian.⁶⁵ Importantly, both the initial mandate from the Swedish Parliament and the renewal three months later, entailed a national caveat that Swedish fighter jets were not allowed to engage ground targets. In total, the Swedish deployment included approximately 130 staff, eight JAS 39 Gripen jets, a C-130 Hercules for aerial refueling, and a S102 Korpen – a signal intelligence plane used for intelligence gathering.⁶⁶

⁶³ Opperman, Kai. "Delineating the Scope Conditions of the Poliheuristic Theory of Foreign Policy Decision Making: The Noncompensatory Principle and the Domestic Salience of Foreign Policy." *Foreign Policy Analysis* 10.1 (2014): 23-41.

⁶⁴ Egnell, Robert. *The Swedish Experience in Operation Unified Protector*. Stockholm: Stockholm Center for Strategic Studies, 2012. P. 4

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* P. 10-11.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* P. 10-11. Also, Doeser, Fredrik. "Sweden's Libya Decision: A Case of Humanitarian Intervention." *International Politics* 51.2 (2014). P. 206

The focus of this paper is the analysis of Sweden's decision to participate in the operation. As such, it will not comment on the performance of the Swedish contribution, challenges faced and lessons learned, the implications that participation had for Sweden's relationship to NATO, and other 'post-decision' events. This has been done elsewhere.⁶⁷ Furthermore, this paper will also not analyze the decision to renew the mandate for the Swedish contribution after the three-month period covered by the initial decision.⁶⁸ Instead, the remainder of this case illustration will focus on the events and developments that led to the Swedish government's decision on March 29, 2011 to participate in the operation and the following approval by the Swedish Parliament on April 1, 2011. This illustration aims to provide the 'diagnostic evidence' for process tracing, which will constitute the basis for the analysis of whether the poliheuristic theory can account for the decision-making process in this case through testing the hypotheses outlined in the previous chapter.

4.2 The Libyan Crisis and the International Response

On February 15, 2011, hundreds of Libyan protestors gathered in the town of Benghazi to demonstrate against the country's regime and its leader, Colonel Muammar Gaddafi. They were met by police and security forces, and a number of the protestors were killed. This was the first major violent clash after a growing number of peaceful demonstrations against the Gaddafi regime had begun in January. Two days later, the Libyan protestors called for a 'day of revolt' and major demonstrations were held across the country. Gaddafi security forces responded by firing at the crowds, and more than a dozen people were killed. In the following days and weeks, protests continued to escalate and soon developed into an armed rebellion that sought to remove Gaddafi from power. Initially, the rebels were successful and within days, they had taken control over a number of cities, including Benghazi, Baida and Tobruk.⁶⁹ Gaddafi responded with force, and systematic attacks by air and ground

⁶⁷ Egnell, Robert. *The Swedish Experience in Operation Unified Protector*. Stockholm: Stockholm Center for Strategic Studies, 2012. See also, Dahl, Ann-Sofie. "Partner Number One or NATO Ally Twenty-nine?" *NATO Defense College Research Paper* 82 (2012): 1-20.

⁶⁸ Government bill. Regeringens proposition 2010/11:127. Fortsatt svenskt deltagande i den internationella militära insatsen i Libyen. 2011. and Parliamentary Report. Sammansatta utrikes- och försvarsutskottets betänkande 2010/11:UFöU4. June 16, 2011.

⁶⁹ Al-Jazeera. "Battle for Libya: Key moments." *Al-Jazeera*, November 19, 2011. Accessed November 22, 2015.
<<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/spotlight/libya/2011/10/20111020104244706760.html>>

forces, often targeting non-combatant civilians.⁷⁰ In early March, Gaddafi's forces began to push the rebels back. Areas previously held by the opposition were retaken, and Gaddafi stated that the opposition would face merciless retaliation, publicly threatening the lives of the residents of Benghazi, and vowing to go 'alley to alley, house to house' in search for protestors.⁷¹ The civilian death toll continued to rise as a result of the attacks.

The UN Security Council adopted two resolutions in response to the situation in Libya. The first, Resolution 1970, was adopted on February 26. The resolution condemned the use of force against civilians, and the "gross and systematic violation of human rights, including the repression of peaceful demonstrators."⁷² The resolution, which received the full support of the League of Arab States, called for an international arms embargo on Libya, and froze the assets of individuals implicated in major human rights violations.⁷³ The second UN Security Council resolution, Resolution 1973, was adopted on March 17. The resolution again condemned the violation of human rights and the violence against civilians, and included three main elements. First, it authorized member states, acting nationally or through regional organizations or arrangements, to use "all necessary measures", except a foreign occupation force of any form on any part of Libyan territory, to protect Libyan civilians. Second, it decided that a no-fly zone should be established over Libya in order to protect civilians and authorized member states to take "all necessary measures" to enforce compliance with the no-fly zone. Third, it strengthened the arms embargo on Libya and specifically emphasized the responsibility of the states in the region to ensure the strict implementation of the embargo.⁷⁴ Ten members of the UN Security Council voted in favor of the resolution, zero against, and five countries

⁷⁰ Doerer, Fredrik. "Sweden's Libya Decision: A Case of Humanitarian Intervention." *International Politics* 51.2 (2014). P. 199

⁷¹ Al-Jazeera. "Battle for Libya: Key moments." *Al-Jazeera*, November 19, 2011. Accessed November 22, 2015. <<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/spotlight/libya/2011/10/2011102-0104244706760.html>> and Kirkpatrick, David D., and Kareem Fahim. "Qaddafi Warns of Assault on Benghazi as U.N. Vote Nears." *The New York Times*, March 17, 2011. Accessed November 4, 2015. <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/18/world/africa/18libya.html?_r=3>

⁷² United Nations Security Council. S/RES/1970, adopted February 26, 2011. Accessed October 28, 2015. <[http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1970\(2011\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1970(2011))>

⁷³ Domansky Katie, Rebecca Jensen, and Rachael Bryson. "Canada and the Libya Coalition." *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* 14.3 (2012). P. 3

⁷⁴ United Nations Security Council. S/RES/1973, adopted March 17, 2011. Accessed October 28, 2015. <[http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1973\(2011\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1973(2011))>

abstained (China, Russia, Brazil, Germany and India). The resolution provided a clear mandate under international law for attacking military targets in order to protect Libyan civilians, and two days after the resolution was adopted, a coalition led by France, the United States, and the United Kingdom launched air and missile strikes on Gaddafi's military forces, both in order to enforce the no-fly zone and to halt Gaddafi's attacks on Benghazi.⁷⁵ Air operations led by the coalition continued over the following days, as did discussions about transferring responsibility of enforcing the no-fly zone to NATO. In parallel, NATO had commenced Operation Unified Protector (OUP) on March 22 as a maritime mission to enforce the UN-mandated arms embargo. On March 27, NATO assumed responsibility for the no-fly zone and, as such, all military aspects of the UN Security Council resolution were under NATO command from that point onwards.⁷⁶

4.3 The Swedish Decision

In Sweden, the government⁷⁷ began expressing its concerns about the unfolding situation in Libya in mid-February 2011. As the violence intensified after the protests in Benghazi and the day of revolt, Foreign Minister Carl Bildt mentioned the developments in a series of posts on his personal blog, referring to the clashes as 'unfortunate' and urged the European Union (EU) to 'condemn all acts of violence'.⁷⁸ The Prime Minister, Fredrik Reinfeldt, made his first public comments on the situation in an interview on February 22, saying that he was startled by the reports that the Gaddafi used fighter jets against unarmed civilians and that regime forces had fired live ammunition at the crowds. The Prime Minister also stated that "I could think of no dictator in the world that should be allowed to remain in power", which in the article was interpreted as a call for Gaddafi's resignation.⁷⁹ Reinfeldt's comments followed an increasing number of reports that Gaddafi used the air force against civilians. A

⁷⁵ McGreal, Chris, Ian Black, Toby Helm, and Kim Willsher. "Allied strikes sweep Libya as west intervenes in conflict." *The Guardian*, March 20, 2011. Accessed November 5, 2015.

<<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/mar/19/libya-air-strikes-gaddafi-france>>

⁷⁶ Domansky Katie, Rebecca Jensen, and Rachael Bryson. "Canada and the Libya Coalition." *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* 14.3 (2012). P. 3-4.

⁷⁷ The government at the time was a center-right coalition, the Alliance, consisting of the Moderate Party, the Liberal Party, the Centre Party, and the Christian Democratic Party.

⁷⁸ Bildt, Carl. "Alla Dessa Dagar." *Personal blog*, different posts February 15 – April 15, 2011. Accessed November 16, 2015. <<https://carlbildt.wordpress.com>>

⁷⁹ Svensson, Niklas. "Reinfeldt: Ingen diktator ska sitta kvar." *Expressen*, February 22, 2011. Accessed November 4, 2015. <<http://www.expressen.se/nyheter/reinfeldt-ingen-diktator-ska-sitta-kvar/>>

day earlier, on February 21, two Libyan air force pilots fled to Malta in their Mirage F1 jets after refusing to carry out orders to bomb civilians in Benghazi, and the same day, a number of Libyan diplomats resigned in protest against Gaddafi's violent response to the unfolding crisis.⁸⁰ One of the resigning diplomats, Ibrahim Dabbashi, Libya's deputy Permanent Ambassador to the UN, also issued the first call to the UN to impose a no-fly zone over the country, which was endorsed two days later by the French President Nicolas Sarkozy.⁸¹

In response to the increasingly volatile situation, the Swedish government decided to provide humanitarian assistance to Libya. The Swedish Air Force also sent a C-130 Hercules transport plane to Malta to assist in humanitarian relief operations and with the evacuation of Swedish and other EU-citizens from Libya. This meant that Swedish Air Force personnel, along with staff from the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency and the Foreign Ministry, were present in the region from late February and onwards. As a result of the evacuation and humanitarian operations, the Swedish Air Force acquired important knowledge of the area, which in turn contributed to the ability to quickly deploy the Gripen fighter jets a month later.⁸²

Meanwhile, the government was criticized by representatives of the Swedish opposition parties⁸³ for not being more outspoken and direct in their support for the opposition in Libya. Urban Ahlin, the Social Democratic spokesperson in foreign policy issues, Gustav Fridolin, one of the Green Party's representatives in the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs, and Hans Linde, the Left Party's spokesperson in foreign policy issues, all questioned the way in which the government dealt with the situation and, in particular, all were very critical of statements made by Foreign Minister Bildt that the point of Sweden's actions was "not to support the one

⁸⁰ Hooper, John, and Ian Black. "Libya defectors: Pilots told to bomb protesters flee to Malta." *The Guardian*, February 21, 2011. Accessed November 5, 2015.
< <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/feb/21/libya-pilots-flee-to-malta>>

⁸¹ Doerer, Fredrik. "Sweden's Libya Decision: A Case of Humanitarian Intervention." *International Politics* 51.2 (2014). P. 200

⁸² Egnell, Robert. *The Swedish Experience in Operation Unified Protector*. Stockholm: Stockholm Center for Strategic Studies, 2012. P. 13

⁸³ In addition to the Social Democratic Party, the Green Party and the Left Party, the Sweden Democrats, a right-wing nationalist party, were also part of the parliamentary opposition in 2011. The Sweden Democrats remained opposed to any Swedish military contribution throughout the weeks that preceded the final decision in parliament, and were also the only party to vote against the government bill that authorized the Swedish participation in the operation.

party or the other. It is about achieving stability and a reasonable development”.⁸⁴ Bildt refuted the criticism, and argued that the government had been clear in their statements on Libya and that Sweden had been one of the driving forces behind the EU’s critical stance and condemnation of the Gaddafi’s violence.⁸⁵

Over the next two weeks, decision makers in Sweden and in the rest of the world continued to follow the situation in Libya with growing concern. The UN Security Council’s adoption of Resolution 1970 on February 26 was welcomed by European governments, including Sweden, the United States and was fully supported by the League of Arab States. The calls for establishing a no-fly zone over Libya, which was not included in Resolution 1970, also intensified. On March 1, the U.S. Senate passed a non-binding resolution that called for the resignation of Gaddafi, and the possible establishment of a no-fly zone. A few days later, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, David Cameron, joined French President Sarkozy’s earlier demand for a no-fly zone, which at that point had also been requested by the leader of the main opposition group, the Libyan National Transitional Council. On March 11, the EU demanded Gaddafi’s resignation, however, the EU leaders were not in agreement on whether military force should be used to this end.⁸⁶ The intensified discussions also extended to the UN Security Council and on March 15, a proposal for a no-fly zone was put forward by Lebanon’s Permanent Ambassador to the UN, with support of France and the United Kingdom.⁸⁷ Two days later, Resolution 1973, which included the no-fly zone, was adopted.

In Sweden, the main opposition party, the Social Democrats, expressed their support for establishing a no-fly zone on the same day that the Lebanese UN representatives presented the proposal, March 15. They demanded that the government push for the adoption of the Lebanese proposal and that Sweden should declare its willingness to

⁸⁴ Tidningarnas Telegrambyrå. “Rödgrön kritik mot Bildts Libyen-uttalande.” *Dagens Nyheter*, February 22, 2011. Accessed November 4, 2015. <<http://www.dn.se/nyheter/varlden/rodgron-kritik-mot-bildts-libyen-uttalande/>> and, Fridolin, Gustav. Skriftlig fråga 2010/2011:326: Protesterna i Libyen, February 22, 2011.

⁸⁵ Tidningarnas Telegrambyrå. “Carl Bildt avfärdar kritik om Libyen-uttalande.” *Expressen*, February 22, 2011. Accessed November 4, 2015. <<http://www.expressen.se/nyheter/carl-bildt-avfardar-kritik-om-libyen-uttalande/>>

⁸⁶ Doeser, Fredrik. “Sweden’s Libya Decision: A Case of Humanitarian Intervention.” *International Politics* 51.2 (2014). P. 200-201

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* P. 201

participate in enforcing it.⁸⁸ In a response, Foreign Minister Bildt criticized the Social Democratic position on his blog, and argued that Sweden could not participate in a no-fly zone without a clear mandate from the UN Security Council. He also argued for the importance of carefully assessing Sweden's capacity to participate before making any commitments and highlighted the possibility that, in order to enforce the no-fly zone, Swedish jets would have to participate in attacks on ground targets such as air defense systems and that this capability was needed in addition to air-to-air combat capacity.⁸⁹

On March 17, the Swedish Parliament debated the situation in Libya. The debate took place prior to the UN Security Council passing Resolution 1973 later the same day. The three main opposition parties, the Social Democrats, the Green Party, and the Left Party, pushed the government to clarify its position in regards to the ongoing discussions in the UN Security Council about the no-fly zone, and again expressed their support for the establishment of the no-fly zone.⁹⁰ Members of Parliament from two of the government coalition parties, the Liberal Party and the Center Party, also expressed support for the establishment of the no-fly zone.⁹¹ Both Prime Minister Reinfeldt and Foreign Minister Bildt participated in the debate, and both argued that the issue of a establishing a no-fly zone should be discussed within the NATO framework, and that an authorization must be given by the UN Security Council.⁹² Both also expressed doubts whether a no-fly zone alone would achieve the objective of halting the advance of Gaddafi's forces and protect Libyan civilians, and argued that military action beyond the no-fly zone likely was required.⁹³ Bildt mentioned that he had expressed this opinion in meeting with EU Foreign Ministers, and that the Swedish government wanted a UN-mandate that authorized military action beyond the establishment of a no-fly zone.⁹⁴

⁸⁸ Tidningarnas Telegrambyrå. "S kräver flygförbud över Libyen." *Dagens Nyheter*, March 15, 2011. Accessed November 15, 2015. <<http://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/s-kraver-flygforbud-over-libyen/>>

⁸⁹ Bildt, Carl. "Alla Dessa Dagar." *Personal blog*, March 15, 2011. Accessed November 16, 2015. <<https://carlbildt.wordpress.com>>

⁹⁰ Parliament Records. Riksdagens protokoll 2010/11:74, statements 11, 13, 37, 111, 112, 113. March 17, 2011.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, statements 114 and 115.

⁹² *Ibid*, statements 10, 12, 110, 126.

⁹³ *Ibid*, statements 12, 14, 110, 118.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, statements 110, 126, 134.

As noted above, Resolution 1973 was adopted later in the day on March 17 and two days later, operations to enforce it were initiated. Bildt welcomed the resolution, as well as the initial attacks on Gaddafi's forces, in a series of posts on his personal blog. He also stressed that, at the time, Sweden had no plans to assist in the operation and that any consideration of a Swedish contribution had to be preceded by a request from NATO.⁹⁵ Bildt was again criticized, by the Social Democrats and by the Liberal Party and the Christian Democratic Party, for insisting on waiting for a NATO request rather than to offer Swedish support.⁹⁶ However, Bildt maintained his position that a NATO request was necessary and that it was much too early to decide about a Swedish contribution to the operation and, if so, the specific nature of such a contribution.⁹⁷ Nevertheless, there were some indications that the government at least was considering the option of sending fighter jets. On March 21, the Head of the Air Tactical Command of the Swedish Air Force confirmed that the government had 'asked some in-depth questions' about the Expeditionary Air Wing (EAW) that was on standby as part of the Swedish-led EU Nordic Battle Group. The fact that the EAW was on standby meant that up to eight JAS39 Gripen fighters could be deployed no later than ten days after receiving the order.⁹⁸ The following day, March 22, the daily newspaper Expressen published a poll conducted by Demoskop that showed that 88 percent of Swedes supported UN military intervention in Libya and that 65 percent of the population thought that Sweden should participate in the military intervention, with 33 percent opposed.⁹⁹

The political process over the next seven days happened at a record pace. On March 23, the Ministry of Defense submitted a formal request to the Swedish Armed Forces for a plan for a possible contribution to the operation. The Armed Forces replied the

⁹⁵ Bildt, Carl. "Alla Dessa Dagar." *Personal blog*, March 18-20, 2011. Accessed November 16, 2015. <<https://carlbildt.wordpress.com>>

⁹⁶ Doerer, Fredrik. "Sweden's Libya Decision: A Case of Humanitarian Intervention." *International Politics* 51.2 (2014). P. 203

⁹⁷ Bildt, Carl. "Alla Dessa Dagar." *Personal blog*, March 20, 2011. Accessed November 16, 2015. <<https://carlbildt.wordpress.com>>

⁹⁸ Tidningarnas Telegrambyrå. "Svenska Jas-plan redo på tio dagar." *Göteborgs Posten*, March 21, 2011. Accessed November 15, 2015. <<http://www.gp.se/nyheter/sverige/1.577477-svenska-jas-plan-redo-pa-tio-dagar>> and, Egnell, Robert. *The Swedish Experience in Operation Unified Protector*. Stockholm: Stockholm Center for Strategic Studies, 2012. P. 12

⁹⁹ Sandberg, Kristofer, and Kasseem Hamadé. "Svenska folket: Sänd Jasplan till Libyen." *Expressen*, March 22, 2011. Accessed November 18, 2015. <<http://www.expressen.se/nyheter/svenska-folket-sand-jasplan-till-libyen/>>

same day, and notified the government that eight Gripen fighters were ready for deployment.¹⁰⁰ On March 24, it was decided that NATO would assume responsibility for the no-fly zone no later than March 29¹⁰¹. On March 25, the European Council emphasized that the EU should contribute to the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973¹⁰². On March 27, NATO assumed complete responsibility for the full international military operation in support of Resolution 1973 (after the decision on March 24 of NATO assuming responsibility for the no-fly zone, disagreement remained as to whether the alliance also should take responsibility for attacks on ground targets to support the protection of civilians. By March 27, these disagreements had been resolved).¹⁰³ According to Foreign Minister Bildt, Sweden was asked if it could contribute to the operation within 24 hours of the NATO decision. The specific question from NATO was if Sweden could contribute fighter jets, resources for intelligence gathering, or helicopters.¹⁰⁴ According to interviews with senior civil servants at the Ministry of Defense, the idea of using contributing Swedish fighter jets came from the 'highest political level'.¹⁰⁵ On March 28, the government began meetings with the opposition parties to discuss the specific nature of the Swedish contribution. In the morning of March 29, an agreement was reached and the Prime Minister presented a bill to the Swedish Parliament later that afternoon.¹⁰⁶ The bill authorized the deployment of the eight JAS39 Gripen fighters, one C-130 Hercules for aerial refueling, one plane for signals intelligence and reconnaissance, and up to 250 personnel, to support the enforcement of the no-fly zone. After demands made by the opposition, the bill also included a caveat that Swedish fighter jets would not attack ground targets.¹⁰⁷ On March 30 and 31, the bill was processed in a joint sitting of the Parliamentary Committee on Defense and the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs, and on April 1, the bill was approved

¹⁰⁰ Government bill. Regeringens proposition 2010/11:111. Svenskt deltagande i den internationella militära insatsen i Libyen. 2011.

¹⁰¹ Doerer, Fredrik. "Sweden's Libya Decision: A Case of Humanitarian Intervention." *International Politics* 51.2 (2014). P. 203

¹⁰² Government bill. Regeringens proposition 2010/11:111. Svenskt deltagande i den internationella militära insatsen i Libyen. 2011.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Parliament Records. Riksdagens protokoll 2010/11:81, statement 10. April 1, 2011.

¹⁰⁵ Interviews with Cederberg and **Göthe, in** Doerer, Fredrik. "Sweden's Libya Decision: A Case of Humanitarian Intervention." *International Politics* 51.2 (2014). P. 204

¹⁰⁶ Egnell, Robert. *The Swedish Experience in Operation Unified Protector*. Stockholm: Stockholm Center for Strategic Studies, 2012. P. 13

¹⁰⁷ Parliament Records. Riksdagens protokoll 2010/11:78, statement 1. March 29, 2011.

and the operation authorized. The debates of March 29 and April 1 made clear the political divisions in the Parliament, as the three main opposition parties expressed their support of the no-ground-attacks caveat, whereas the four government parties, to varying extents, criticized the opposition for making this demand.¹⁰⁸ The day following the decision in Parliament, the Swedish Air Force started deploying to the Sigonella Base in Italy.¹⁰⁹

The above case illustration has sought to provide a comprehensive picture of the key events leading up to the Swedish decision to participate in Operation Unified Protector.

Chapter 5 – Analysis

The paper now turns to the final stage of the CPT process outlined in Chapter 3, hypotheses testing. In order to evaluate the hypotheses, the available decision alternatives identified in the case illustration will first be outlined. The two key hypotheses will then be evaluated in turn, and finally, one of the key challenges for poliheuristic theory emerging from the evidence will be discussed. Unless otherwise is noted, the analysis is based on the observations made in the previous chapter.

5.1 Alternatives

Based on the evidence, the alternatives that the Swedish government considered in response to the Libya crisis can be summarized as follows:

1. Diplomatic efforts, economic sanctions, and humanitarian aid mainly through the EU.
2. No contribution to any of the aspects of the implementation of Resolution 1973 that required military resources.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, statements 14; and, Parliament Records. Riksdagens protokoll 2010/11:81, statements 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9. April 1, 2011.

¹⁰⁹ Egnell, Robert. *The Swedish Experience in Operation Unified Protector*. Stockholm: Stockholm Center for Strategic Studies, 2012. P. 4

¹¹⁰ In other words, no contribution to implementing the parts of the resolution that authorized the use of force under Chapter VII of the UN Charter.

3. Contribute JAS39 Gripen fighter jets to the NATO operation for the implementation of Resolution 1973.
4. Contribute JAS39 Gripen fighter jets to the NATO operation for the implementation of Resolution 1973, *with the caveat that they were not allowed to attack ground targets.*
5. Contribute resources for intelligence gathering in support of the implementation of Resolution 1973.
6. Contribute helicopters to the NATO operation for the implementation of Resolution 1973.

The crisis escalated to a level where it attracted broad attention from Swedish decision makers and news media by February 15, 2011, and the final authorization to contribute to the NATO-led Operation Unified Protector was given in a vote in the Swedish Parliament on April 1. As such, the window for decision-making was approximately 45 days. The final decision made by the Swedish government was a combination of alternatives 1, 4, and 6.

Before proceeding to examining the evidence for the hypotheses, it is important to note that the Swedish government made a decision fairly early in the Libyan crisis, approximately one week after the major increase in violence began, to provide humanitarian aid to Libya as well as to contribute to the evacuation efforts of EU citizens. Thus, decision alternative number 1 was selected and implemented. There is no available evidence that this was met by any substantial debate or controversy, either by the general public or by decision makers, or that the decision was preceded by extended or complex deliberations by the government. Instead, the more complex decision situation faced by the government was whether, and if so, how Sweden would contribute to the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1973 – decision alternatives 2 to 6. As such, this is the decision situation that will be analyzed in the following sections.

5.2 Evidence for Hypothesis One

H1: Only politically acceptable options will survive consideration at stage one of decision-making.

Statements by representatives of the government, notably Prime Minister Reinfeldt and Foreign Minister Bildt, indicate that no decision about a Swedish contribution to implementing the aspects of Resolution 1973 that required military resources had been made as late in the process as March 20. Since there is no strong evidence to suggest the contrary, and no particularly obvious reason as to why such a decision would not have been made public if it in fact had been made, it is reasonable to assume that the government was still undecided at that time. Thus, the decision-making window for the government was shortened to the nine days between March 20 and March 29, when the government bill to authorize the Swedish contribution was introduced in parliament.

In relation to the public support variable of hypothesis 1, and whether public support influenced the government to eliminate politically unacceptable options, the first piece of expected observable evidence can be found in the opinion poll published on March 22. The poll showed overwhelming public support for UN-backed military intervention, and that 65 per cent of Swedes supported Swedish military participation in an intervention. Thus, the poll indicated a strong support of military participation, which by extension implies a public disapproval of decision alternative 2. Yet, even though the final decision made by the government together with the main opposition parties is in line with public support as expressed in the poll, there is no further observable evidence of public opinion influencing either the rejection of alternative 2 as politically unacceptable or the final decision. No statements were made by government representatives and no other indication can be observed that suggests public opinion was perceived as a constraining factor, and nor was it cited as a reason for contributing to the operation in any bill or other official document that presented the decision.

The finding above shows the importance of examining causal mechanisms in addition to the independent and dependent variable. In the case of the Swedish contribution to the Libya intervention, there are a number of pieces of evidence in addition to the

opinion poll mentioned above that indicates that the government was acting in line with public opinion, in other words, that indicates a relationship between the variables. First, as Dahl has pointed out, a Swedish contribution was in line with the Swedish tradition on participating in UN-sanctioned peacekeeping and peace enforcing missions and a Swedish contribution was therefore “more likely than not”¹¹¹. Second, opinion polls after the decision had been made showed continued strong Swedish public support for participating.¹¹² Third, opinion polls shortly after the contribution was decided showed a significant increase of the government’s approval rating.¹¹³ However no piece of evidence observed provides convincing support that the government eliminated certain decision options because they perceived them as politically unacceptable based on public opinion. In other words, whereas there are some indications that the public support variable could be important, there is no evidence of the public support casual mechanism operating as hypothesized in the case of Sweden’s Libya decision. In previous applications of poliheuristic theory, a similar standard (i.e. evidence not only demonstrating low public support for an option but that this is also identified by decision makers as a political risk or cost and thus makes the option unacceptable) for making claims about the influence of public support on how decision makers select among policy options has been used, thus making such a standard appropriate for this study as well.¹¹⁴

In relation to the second variable, low parliamentary support, and its hypothesized casual mechanism, expected observable evidence is also found in the case illustration. All opposition parties expressed their support for a Swedish contribution to implement Resolution 1973, particularly the enforcement of the no-fly zone, in statements made in parliament, and in interviews and op-ed pieces. In their responses, both the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister made it clear that they were aware of the low support and, importantly, that the government was aware of this prior to making a decision. In various statements and interviews, the Prime Minister and

¹¹¹ Dahl, Ann-Sofie. “Partner Number One or NATO Ally Twenty-nine?” *NATO Defense College Research Paper* 82 (2012). P. 5-6.

¹¹² Egnell, Robert. *The Swedish Experience in Operation Unified Protector*. Stockholm: Stockholm Center for Strategic Studies, 2012. P. 6-7.

¹¹³ Nilsson, Per. “Väljarbarometer för april.” *Demoskop*, April 12, 2011. Accessed November 23, 2015. <<http://www.demoskop.se/publicerat/valjarbarometer-for-april-2/#text>>

¹¹⁴ Brulé, David J. “Explaining and Forecasting Leaders’ Decisions: A Poliheuristic Analysis of the Iran Hostage Rescue Decision.” *International Studies Perspectives* 6.1 (2005): 99-113.

Foreign Minister also made it clear that it was important to the government to have broad parliamentary support for their course of action. As such, it can be claimed with reasonable certainty that the government saw alternative 2 as politically unacceptable due to its low support by parties in parliament, and that this option therefore was eliminated from the alternatives under consideration.

Similarly, low parliamentary support can also be seen to influence the decision to include the national caveat that the Swedish fighter jets were not allowed to attack ground targets, thus the rejection of alternative 3. Both Reinfeldt and Bildt had expressed their doubts that efforts that did not allow for engaging targets on the ground would be sufficient to achieve the desired objective, both in terms of a contribution limited to the no-fly zone component of Resolution 1973 (as in their opinion, enforcing a no-fly zone still would include attacks on ground-based air defense systems) and to a contribution for the protection of Libyan civilians (as, again in their assessment, the threat to Libyan civilians also came from ground-based weapons such as tanks and artillery).¹¹⁵ Furthermore, in media reports as well as in statements made in parliament, both when the government bill was introduced and during the final debate of the bill that preceded the vote that gave the authorization for the deployment, the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister, and representative of all four government parties made it clear that their preferred policy option was the contribution of fighter jets with no caveats but that this had been abandoned in order to attain broad parliamentary support for the final decision. As such, it can be claimed with considerable certainty that the government ended up viewing alternative 3 (fighter jets with no caveats) as politically unacceptable in relation to its low support from other political parties, and that this option therefore was eliminated from the alternatives under consideration. However, whether this decision can be considered to have been made as part of the first stage of decision-making, as predicted by poliheuristic theory, is problematic, and an issue that will be returned to below.

¹¹⁵ In addition to case illustration in Chapter 4, see also specifically: Parliament Records. Riksdagens protokoll 2010/11:74, statements 11, 126. March 17, 2011.

4.3 Evidence for Hypothesis Two

H2: Remaining options are evaluated across a more diverse set of dimensions and a final decision is made that seeks to maximize benefits and minimize risks.

The expected observable evidence in support of the second hypothesis is also found in the case illustration. For example, once alternative 2 (no contribution to any of the aspects of the implementation of Resolution 1973 that required military resources) had been eliminated from the list of possible alternatives, the government demonstrated that remaining options were considered along at least two aspects of a military dimension, the diplomatic dimension, as well as a political dimension, before a final decision was made. From a military point of view, the government demonstrated that they considered both the issue of availability of appropriate military resources, as well as the mandate required to best contribute towards the military objective (i.e. the issue of allowing ground attacks). From a diplomatic point of view, the government considered both the decision made in the European Council that EU countries should contribute to the implementation of Resolution 1973¹¹⁶, as well as Sweden's relationship to NATO (which of course is important on the military dimension as well)¹¹⁷, in addition to the political dimension. That multiple dimensions were considered in the making of the final decision has also been demonstrated by Dahl, Doesler, and Egnell in their respective explorations of the case. As mentioned above, the issue of where to situate the decision of including the no ground attack caveat in the final decision in the poliheuristic two stage model remains problematic and will be discussed below. As will be demonstrated, depending on how this issues is viewed, it will either provide grounds for confirming or disproving the second hypothesis.

4.4 Challenges

One challenge that has been uncovered in the analysis above, and that is apparent in the broader poliheuristic literature, is that it is mostly non-prescriptive in determining

¹¹⁶ See case illustration, as well as specifically, Government bill. Regeringens proposition 2010/11:111. Svenskt deltagande i den internationella militära insatsen i Libyen. 2011.

¹¹⁷ See case illustration, as well as specifically, Reinfeldt, Fredrik, Carl Bildt, och Karin Engstöm. "Debattartikel: Ett nytt Nato har växt fram." *Svenska Dagbladet*, May 21, 2012. Accessed December 4, 2015. < http://www.svd.se/ett-nytt-nato-har-vaxt-fram_7215955>

the cut-off point between stage one and stage two of decision-making. It therefore becomes difficult for the researcher or analyst to determine when a decision maker switches decision strategy and when a decision maker has deemed that all politically unacceptable options have been eliminated. Also, new factors that make an option politically unacceptable can emerge during the process of decision-making, i.e. when the decision-maker believes that all politically unviable options have been eliminated, which would imply that a return to a noncompensatory decision rule is necessary. This seems to be what happened in the case of Sweden's contribution to the Libya intervention. The available evidence indicates that the opposition parties did not indicate their unwillingness to allow the Swedish fighter jets to attack ground targets until the day before the decision was made. That the government agreed to include the caveat can be understood in two ways. First, the government had clearly indicated that their preference was for a deployment of the fighter jets without the caveat, and that this was based on the expected usefulness of the Swedish contribution to fulfill the military objectives. Put in poliheuristic terms, it was a preferred option on the military dimension. Furthermore, NATO had indicated that fighter jets with air to ground attack ability was what was really needed.¹¹⁸ As such, this could be viewed as a preferred option on the diplomatic dimension as providing the desired capability could be expected to be met by a more favorable response, thus strengthening Sweden's relationship to NATO. Indeed, to further support this assumption, the introduction of the caveat led to punitive consequences for Swedish diplomats and liaison officers engaging with NATO structures.¹¹⁹ However, the Swedish government still decided to accept the opposition's demand for the no ground attack caveat, which could indicate that the high ratings on the military and diplomatic dimension did not compensate for the low rating on the political dimension (no parliamentary support) and that the government therefore reverted to a noncompensatory decision strategy. The other possible reading of the case is that different dimensions were considered, and that by a combined assessment, the government still considered that the preferred option was to deploy the Swedish fighter jets, even with the caveat. If the decision was between deploying the jets with the caveat or not deploying them at all, it could be argued that the latter, for example,

¹¹⁸ Egnell, Robert. *The Swedish Experience in Operation Unified Protector*. Stockholm: Stockholm Center for Strategic Studies, 2012. P. 13

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.* P. 31-32.

would have included significant diplomatic costs in form of a weakening of Sweden's relationship with NATO, a lost opportunity to deploy JAS39 fighters which were previously untested in a combat situation, etc. The combination of such factors across different dimensions could way up for shortcomings in not selecting what up to that point was the preferred option, thus indicating a compensatory decision strategy in line with the predictions by poliheuristic theory. This problem and the two possible interpretations clearly shows that additional research is required before the hypothesis, and thus poliheuristic theory's explanatory potential, can be conclusively approved or disproved. Possible avenues for such research will be discussed in the conclusion.

Chapter 6 - Conclusion

6.1 Conclusion

The paper has sought to conduct a first test of poliheuristic theory's explanatory potential in the context of foreign policy decision-making in small states. It argued that poliheuristic theory's previous successes in a number of different studies, paired with its claims of applicability to all contexts of foreign policy decision-making, made it a particularly interesting candidate for additional testing. A gap in the literature on poliheuristic theory was found in its lack of application to foreign policy making in small states, and this paper set out as an attempt to fill that gap. In sum, the analysis in the paper showed that the evidence to confirm the existence of the hypothesized relationship, the causal mechanisms between the independent and depended variable, and the predicted two-stage process of decision-making was inconclusive but that it indicated the potential that poliheuristic theory operated as expected. In particular, there was evidence that demonstrated that lack of support from political parties in parliament for certain policy options resulted in those options being eliminated from consideration. However, there was no conclusive evidence to confirm or disprove whether the effect of low political party support was limited to the first stage of decision-making, as predicted by poliheuristic theory, or if it also acted as a noncompensatory dimension at the second stage of decision-making. Thus, the inconclusive results of this paper are more akin to the results typically found through a plausibility probe case study. They demonstrate potential validity of the

poliheuristic understanding the decision-making process, but fall short of demonstrating actual validity. Consequently, it is not possible to confidently answer the research question formulated in this paper or to draw any definitive conclusion about poliheuristic theory's broader applicability in small states without future research.

6.2 Suggestions for Future Research

As indicated above as well as in the Chapter 3, there are a number of possibilities for future research that would further the knowledge of poliheuristic theory's applicability in small states, and to improve the theory overall. Three will be highlighted here. First, supported by the results in this study, which shows that poliheuristic theory is potentially valid in small states, one future avenue for research would be the continued testing of poliheuristic theory on a larger population of cases. This can be conducted as a series of tests of different Swedish foreign policy decision-making events, as well as a test of foreign policy decision-making in other small states. Second, further specification and testing of the noncompensatory dimensions is important. This case demonstrated some of the difficulties inherent in poliheuristic theory and its understanding of noncompensatory. In particular, that the cut-off point is not specified means it is difficult to distinguish between stage one and two and when the decision rule changes from dimension-based, or noncompensatory, to compensatory, or alternative based. Future research should pay attention to this issue. Additionally, in regards to the issue of the noncompensatory dimension, it is also important to highlight that some researchers have already suggested the possibility that domestic politics is not the only plausible noncompensatory dimension in foreign policy decision-making.¹²⁰ This should be further investigated, and particular attention should be paid to whether the noncompensatory dimension differs between decision-makers in small states compared to other contexts. Third, and as previously pointed out, future research should also strive to identify the broader scope conditions for when the poliheuristic theory is more likely to function as hypothesized. Issue salience is one possible way of conceptualizing scope conditions, and undoubtedly there are more. Tending to these three areas, i.e. a continued focus

¹²⁰ Opperman, Kai. "Delineating the Scope Conditions of the Poliheuristic Theory of Foreign Policy Decision Making: The Noncompensatory Principle and the Domestic Salience of Foreign Policy." *Foreign Policy Analysis* 10.1 (2014). P. 25

on small states, the specification of the theory's temporal stages and cut off points for when decision rules change, and an improved understanding of scope conditions, will contribute to the further development towards a more robust poliheuristic theory.

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