

Explaining Military Engagement in the Fight Against Daesh: A Set-Theoretic Analysis

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Abstract

In September 2014, the United States initiated the formation of a multilateral military operation (MMO) against Daesh (also IS, ISIS, or ISIL) in Syria and Iraq. Since then, more than 70 states have officially joined the coalition. However, actual contributions to the military effort have been characterized by great variance. While some states took leading roles in the airstrikes against Daesh, others provided training for Iraqi and Kurdish forces, and still others did not get involved at all. Against this backdrop, this paper makes a two-fold contribution to the literature on burden sharing and democratic conflict involvement. Empirically, the paper provides a mapping of the 28 European Union member states' military engagement in the fight against Daesh in Syria and Iraq. Analytically, fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA) is applied to explain the observed pattern of military involvement, using an integrative framework that combines international and domestic factors. The results show that countries make military contributions for different reasons – while some are primarily responding to a perceived threat, others are involved chiefly because they value the security alliance with the United States and their European partners.

Keywords

coalitions, domestic politics, multilateral military operations,
parliamentary war powers, war involvement

Introduction¹

On September 10, 2014 President Obama announced that the United States had formed a multilateral coalition of countries to “roll back” the terrorist threat emanating from the so-called “Islamic State” in Iraq and Syria (WH 2014).² Three months later, representatives from 60 states met in Brussels and passed a joint statement that outlined five goals in the global fight against Daesh, including the support of “military operations, capacity building, and training”, as well as addressing the unfolding humanitarian crisis in the region (DoS 2014). On November 17, 2015, following terrorist attacks on the satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo*, where 12 people were killed, France invoked Article 42 (7) of the European Union’s Lisbon Treaty, calling upon European solidarity in the fight against Daesh. Three days later, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 2249, which condemned Daesh for “its continued gross systematic and widespread attacks directed against civilians” and called upon member states to “take all necessary measures in compliance with international law”.

Since then, more than 70 states have officially joined the coalition. However, actual contributions to the multilateral effort have been characterized by great variance. While some states took leading roles in the airstrikes against Daesh, others provided training for Iraqi and Kurdish forces, and still others did not get involved at all. Previous studies have documented international contributions to the U.S.-led coalition (McInnis 2016) and started to explore potential explanations for the observed variance (Saideman 2016), but there has not yet been a systematic comparison of EU member state involvement.³

Against this backdrop, this paper makes a two-fold contribution to the literature on burden sharing and democratic conflict involvement. Empirically, the paper provides a mapping of the 28 European Union member states’ military engagement in the fight against Daesh in Syria and Iraq. Analytically, fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA) is applied to explain the observed pattern of military involvement, using an integrative framework that combines international and domestic factors. The results show that countries make military contributions

¹ I am grateful to Danielle Al-Qassir and Teslin Augustine for valuable research assistance and thank the Willy Brandt School of Public Policy at the University of Erfurt for funding their work.

² The group is variously referred to as IS (Islamic State), ISIS (Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham), ISIL (Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant), or Daesh (*al-Dawla al-Islamiya fil Iraq wa al-Sham*). The US government mostly uses the term “ISIL”, whereas France and the UK have made it their policy to call the group “Daesh” because that term carries negative connotations in Arabic and it does legitimize the group as an Islamic state. For a discussion of the terminology, see (Connable et al. 2017; Irshaid 2015; Stone 2015).

³ The sole exception is Haesebrouck (2018), whose study focuses on explaining democracies’ involvement in the airstrikes against Daesh.

for different reasons – while some are primarily responding to a perceived threat, others are involved chiefly because they value the security alliance with the United States and their European partners.

Explaining Contributions to the Anti-Daesh Coalition

How to explain the puzzling variance in contributions to U.S.-led coalitions? Existing accounts alternately emphasize alliance membership (Snyder 1997), threat perception (Walt 1987), alliance value (Davidson 2011), or diplomatic embeddedness (Henke 2017) as reasons why states decide to join a military coalition. For the anti-Daesh coalition it might have also mattered that many countries did not want to repeat their experiences from the long-standing campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq (Saideman 2016). While these accounts may be persuasive for some cases, they disregard domestic politics. Yet, decisions on military contributions are usually decided at the cabinet level, which means they are subject to party politics (Haesebrouck and Mello 2017) and government leaders have to take into account institutional constraints, such as parliamentary veto rights on military deployments (Peters and Wagner 2011) or public opinion (Baum and Potter 2008; 2015). Building on previous efforts to combine international and domestic-level explanations,⁴ this paper proposes an integrative theoretical framework to explain EU member states' military contributions to the anti-Daesh coalition in Iraq and Syria.

External Threat

From a realist perspective, a primary driver of why states join a military coalition or increase their allied cooperation is that they feel threatened (Kupchan 1988; Walt 1987). The swift rise of Daesh combined with an apparent increase in terrorist activity in Europe and elsewhere certainly increased leaders' willingness to "do something" about this new phenomenon, especially after the attacks in Paris in late 2015. This was compounded by reports about a steady flow of foreign fighters arriving in Syria and Iraq to join Daesh. While exact estimates vary, most reports come to the conclusion a substantial share of foreign fighters originated from Western Europe, including large numbers from France, Germany, the UK, the Netherlands and Belgium (TSG 2015).

⁴ Previous efforts to create integrated models of multiple factors that explain military contributions include, among others: Bennett et al. (1994), Auerswald (2004), Baltrusaitis (2009), Mello (2012), and Haesebrouck (2018).

Alliance Value

Another explanation for military involvement in coalition operations is the value that states place on their alliance relationship (Davidson 2011; Massie 2016).⁵ This is related, but not identical to long-standing arguments about alliance dependence (Bennett et al. 1994; Snyder 1984). States may value their security alliance with the U.S. for different reasons, but this is unrelated to alliance dependence. For example, Eastern Europeans – particularly the Baltic countries and Poland – value their NATO membership because this serves as a credible security guarantee against neighboring Russia. Others, such as Denmark or the United Kingdom, regard a close relationship with the U.S. as a way to maintain international influence and standing.⁶ Applying such arguments to NATO, Ringsmose (2010, 331) thus distinguishes between “Article 5ers” and “Atlanticists”. The former are states that feel insecure or threatened and thus emphasize NATO’s mutual defense clause. The latter are countries that traditionally maintain “special relationships” with the United States. Both of these groups would be expected to support and contribute to US-led military operations, even when these are conducted outside the official organizational framework of NATO.

Parliamentary Veto Rights

Recent work has started to explore the role of parliaments in security policy (Mello and Peters 2018; Raunio and Wagner 2017; Reykers and Fonck 2015), investigating the effects of specific forms of institutional constraints, such as constitutional restrictions and parliamentary veto rights (Peters and Wagner 2014). This literature emphasizes that decisions about military deployments are dependent upon structural and procedural restrictions (Mello 2019), and that parliaments are important actors also in security policy, particularly when they hold a formal veto right over military missions (Wagner 2018). While mandatory parliamentary involvement can also yield unintended consequences (Lagassé and Mello 2018), the general expectation is that whenever legislatures have a say on military missions this creates an additional hurdle for government activism. To be sure, this is not an absolute constraint. But when there is substantial public opposition or parliamentary dissent then contributions should be less likely.

Party Politics

The realist conjecture that “politics stops at the water’s edge” has long dominated IR thinking about partisanship and security policy (Gowa 1998). Yet studies have shown that ideological differences between parties on the left and the right also affect the way that parties formulate

⁵ Related perspectives emphasize “status-seeking” (Pedersen 2018) or “reputation” as primary motives (Oma and Petersson 2019).

⁶ For an illustration of alliance value considerations in the context of Canada, see von Hlatky and Massie (2019).

security policy and how they implement their programs once in government (Budge et al. 2001). An emerging literature demonstrates that left-right differences between parties are not limited to domestic politics, but that these also translate into the security realm (Arena and Palmer 2009; Koch and Sullivan 2010; Rathbun 2004; Wagner et al. 2017). In a recent contribution, Haesebrouck and Mello (2017) show that while right-wing parties are generally more supportive of military missions, left-wing parties are more likely to contribute to peacekeeping operations and humanitarian interventions. For the anti-Daesh coalition it is difficult to derive clear-cut expectations, because the operations are multi-faceted and range from airstrikes to humanitarian aid. Yet, the military effort is decidedly “robust” and it takes place outside of institutional frameworks. On this basis, right-wing government can be expected to be more supportive of actually deploying forces.

Public Opinion

Public opinion is a central building block in many theories on the democratic peace and democratic conflict behavior more generally (Doyle 1983; Russett and Oneal 2001). The reasoning behind the idea of a “public constraint” goes back to Kant’s famous proposition that citizens would decide against war if they had to approve it (Kant 2007, 100). When applied to a contemporary context, questions arise as to whether the public truly constitutes a constraint on government behavior (Rosato 2003). However, studies have shown that, given certain preconditions are met, public opinion can stop government from military engagements. For instance, Dieterich et al. (2015) show that war-averse publics combined with institutional constraints stopped many European governments from becoming engaged in the Iraq War. More generally, Baum and Potter (2015) argue that public opinion and media access are key variables to understand democratic constraint in foreign policy.

An Integrated Model of Coalition Contributions

Given the inherent complexity of the foreign policy process, none of the aforementioned factors is expected to provide a complete account for the variance in coalition contributions. Instead, I expect these conditions to interact, forming combinations that either push towards military contribution or prevent a military engagement. External threat and alliance value are both expected to be “push” factors that motivate government to join the coalition. On the contrary, parliamentary veto rights and public opinion are considered to be potential constraints on executive activism. As explained above, party politics can cut both ways, but the general expectation would be that right-wing governments are more likely to contribute militarily.

Method

This paper uses fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA, Ragin 1987) to investigate the expected complex interaction between explanatory factors. As a set-theoretic method, QCA aims at identifying necessary and sufficient conditions for an outcome. QCA is ideally suited to recognize the combination of more than one factor (*conjunctural causation*) and the existence of multiple pathways toward an outcome (*equifinality*).⁷

While QCA has been widely used in sociology and comparative politics, it can still be considered a novel approach in international relations, and conflict research in particular. That being said, recent years have seen a number of QCA applications in these fields, including on topics such as democracies' involvement in the Iraq War (Mello 2012), the outbreak of ethnic conflict (Bara 2014), NATO burden sharing (Haesebrouck 2017), junior partners in military coalitions (Schmitt 2018), or environmental peacekeeping (Ide 2018).

In contrast to the crisp-set variant of QCA, which works with binary values, fuzzy-set QCA allows researchers to take into account *qualitative* and *quantitative* differences (Ragin 2000). Fuzzy sets can assume any value between 0 and 1. Using a software-based procedure,⁸ quantitative datasets can be calibrated into fuzzy sets by assigning three qualitative anchors, which are determined by the researcher. These three thresholds designate which scores in the data are considered to be “fully in” a specified fuzzy set (resulting in a fuzzy value of 1), which scores are regarded as “neither in nor out” (these receive a fuzzy value of 0.5), and which scores are “fully out” of a specified fuzzy set (receiving a fuzzy value of 0). The “direct method of calibration” then applies a logistic function that transforms the raw data into fuzzy values, based on the qualitative anchors set by the researcher (Ragin 2008). This procedure returns fine-grained fuzzy values that show whether a case is *qualitatively* rather inside or outside a set and to what *quantitative* extent the case shows membership in a given fuzzy set.

Military Participation in the Airstrikes against Daesh

Why did some EU member states decide to participate militarily in the anti-Daesh coalition when others abstained? Table 1 summarizes military contributions to the anti-Daesh coalition across the 28 EU members. Essentially, there are three groups of countries. The first group includes those that were actively involved in the airstrikes, either by bombing targets

⁷ For comprehensive introductions to QCA, see Ragin (2008) and Schneider and Wagemann (2012). For an illustration of the QCA research process, see Mello (2017).

⁸ The analysis in this paper was conducted within the R software environment, using the packages “QCA” (Duşa 2007) and “SetMethods” (Medzihorsky et al. 2018).

themselves (United Kingdom, France, Denmark, Netherlands, and Belgium) or through the provision of air support or reconnaissance operations (Germany, Italy, and Poland).⁹

The second group of countries contains those that solely contributed to the training effort, seeking to enable Iraqi and Kurdish forces. While all of these were small-scale training missions, some countries deployed substantial numbers (between 30 and 500 soldiers, including Spain, Finland, Hungary, Sweden, Romania, and Portugal), whereas others send only a handful of officers (the Baltic countries and Slovenia). Finally, a third group of countries made no contributions whatsoever, except for logistical support (e.g. overflight and basing rights in Greece and Cyprus) or expressions of political support (Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Luxembourg, and Slovakia). Two countries did not officially endorse the anti-Daesh coalition (Ireland and Malta).

Table 1: Military Contributions to the anti-Daesh Coalition

⁹ The categorization does not distinguish at which point in time the contributions were made. Whereas the UK and France conducted airstrikes from September 2014 onward, Denmark, the Netherlands and Belgium followed a month later. Italy deployed reconnaissance aircraft in November 2014, while Germany followed in December 2015 and Poland in June 2016 (Carter 2017; Drennan 2014; McInnis 2016). Airstrikes were initially restricted to Iraq and only later expanded to Syria. On the importance of sequencing in military contributions for the Nordic countries, see Pedersen (2018).

Country	Fuzzy Value	Military Contribution to the anti-Daesh Coalition	Personnel
United Kingdom	1.0	Air strikes in Iraq and Syria, training Iraqi forces	1,400
France	1.0	Air strikes in Iraq and Syria, training Iraqi forces	1,000
Denmark	1.0	Air strikes in Iraq and Syria, training Iraqi forces	300
Netherlands	1.0	Air strikes in Iraq and Syria	200
Belgium	1.0	Air strikes in Iraq and Syria, training Kurdish forces	150
Germany	0.8	Reconnaissance operations, training Kurdish forces	1,200
Italy	0.8	Reconnaissance operations, training Iraqi and Kurdish forces	1,500
Poland	0.8	Reconnaissance operations	150
Spain	0.2	Training Iraqi forces	480
Finland	0.2	Training Iraqi and Kurdish forces	100
Hungary	0.2	Training Iraqi forces	116
Sweden	0.2	Training Iraqi forces	70
Romania	0.2	Training Iraqi forces	50
Portugal	0.2	Training Iraqi forces	30
Estonia	0.1	Training Iraqi forces	6
Latvia	0.1	Training Iraqi forces	6
Lithuania	0.1	Training Iraqi forces	6
Slovenia	0.1	Training Kurdish forces	6
Czech Republic	0.1	Military supplies	-
Cyprus	0.0	Political and logistical support (overflight and basing)	-
Austria	0.0	Political support	-
Bulgaria	0.0	Political support	-
Croatia	0.0	Political support	-
Luxembourg	0.0	Political support	-
Slovakia	0.0	Political support	-
Greece	0.0	Political and logistical support (overflight and basing)	-
Ireland	0.0	No involvement	-
Malta	0.0	No involvement	-

Explanatory Conditions: Data and Calibration

The set-theoretic analysis contains five explanatory conditions: external threat (T), alliance value (A), rightist partisanship (R), parliamentary veto rights (V), and public opinion (P). Table 2 lists the EU-28 by relevant cabinet or government leader and provides raw data and calibrated fuzzy values for the included conditions.

External Threat indicates whether a country has experienced lethal terrorist attacks (with at least one fatality) on its own soil with a jihadi or Muslim extremist background and/or whether citizens of this country have joined Daesh as foreign fighters. The terrorism data comes from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD 2018).¹⁰ The search terms yielded 33 incidents with a total of 426 deaths from terrorist attacks within the European Union in the time period between September 11, 2001 and December 31, 2015. Data on foreign fighters stems from a report by

¹⁰ National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), University of Maryland (2018). The Global Terrorism Database, GTD 1970-2017 data file. Retrieved from <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd> [accessed February 25, 2019].

the Soufan Group (2015). Given the nature of the phenomenon, the numbers cited remain estimates – most of which have been confirmed in later investigations. For September 2015, a total of 30,000 foreign fighters from over 100 countries were estimated to be in Syria. About 5,000 of these came from EU member states. The empirical pattern is relatively clear-cut: 12 EU member states had citizens who joined Daesh as foreign fighters, many of these countries also experienced deaths from jihadi-motivated terrorist attacks on their own soil. These countries receive a score of 1 for external threat, whereas those without foreign fighters and no terrorist attacks received a score of 0.

Alliance Value reflects whether a country has specific incentives to contribute militarily, beyond expectations that arise from its formal alliance membership. This applies foremost to the Baltic countries, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, as well as Poland. Due to their conflictive neighborhood to Russia, these four EU members have the greatest interest in securing a strong partnership with the United States and therefore seek to maintain a status as loyal NATO members (fuzzy values of 1.0). Other countries with a strong “Atlanticist” bend are the United Kingdom, Denmark, and the Netherlands (fuzzy values of 1.0), which is apparent from the UK’s traditional “special relationship” with the United States and the Danish “opt-out” from the EU’s Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). While Sweden is not a NATO member, its partnership with the alliance has become substantially stronger in the light of conflict with Russia (fuzzy value of 0.9). The Eastern Europeans Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania also maintain strong ties to the United States, though with less urgency than, for example, the Baltic countries. These receive fuzzy values of 0.6.

Table 2: EU-28 Governments and Explanatory Conditions

Code	Country	Cabinet/ Government	External Threat (T)			Alliance Value (A)	Rightist Partisanship (R)		Parliamentary Veto Rights (V)	Public Opinion (P)	
			Fuzzy Values	Foreign Fighters	Terrorism (Deaths)	Fuzzy Values	Fuzzy Values	Left-Right (raw)	Fuzzy Values	Fuzzy Values	Public Opinion
AT	Austria	Faymann II	1.00	300	0	0.00	0.51	5.03	1.00	0.00	70%
BE	Belgium	Di Rupo II	1.00	470	4	0.00	0.54	5.09	0.00	0.97	91%
BG	Bulgaria	Borisov II	0.00	0	0	0.60	0.98	7.02	1.00	0.85	88%
HR	Croatia	Milanovic	0.00	0	0	0.00	0.96	2.97	1.00	0.03	79%
CY	Cyprus	Anastasiades II	0.00	0	0	0.00	0.02	8.45	1.00	0.95	90%
CZ	Czech Republic	Sobotka	0.00	0	0	0.00	1.00	4.62	1.00	0.85	88%
DK	Denmark	Thorning-Schmidt	1.00	125	2	1.00	0.15	4.11	1.00	0.95	90%
EE	Estonia	Roivas I	0.00	0	0	1.00	0.95	6.55	1.00	0.51	85%
FI	Finland	Stubb I	1.00	70	0	0.00	0.03	5.45	1.00	0.98	92%
FR	France	Hollande	1.00	1700	168	0.00	0.63	3.20	0.00	0.97	91%
DE	Germany	Merkel III	1.00	760	3	0.00	0.32	5.27	1.00	0.15	82%
GR	Greece	Samaras II	0.00	0	0	0.00	0.92	6.25	0.00	0.64	86%
HU	Hungary	Orban III	0.00	0	0	0.60	0.72	6.61	1.00	0.64	86%
IE	Ireland	Kenny I	1.00	30	0	0.00	0.04	5.48	1.00	0.01	77%
IT	Italy	Renzi	1.00	87	0	0.00	0.99	3.40	0.00	0.09	81%
LV	Latvia	Straujuma	0.00	0	0	1.00	0.17	7.17	1.00	0.36	84%
LT	Lithuania	Butkevicius	0.00	0	0	1.00	0.09	3.79	1.00	0.95	90%
LU	Luxembourg	Bettel I	0.00	0	0	0.00	0.27	4.49	1.00	1.00	94%
MT	Malta	Muscat I	0.00	0	0	0.00	0.74	4.20	1.00	0.98	92%
NL	Netherlands	Rutte III	1.00	220	0	1.00	0.87	5.52	0.00	0.95	90%
PL	Poland	Tusk II	0.00	0	0	1.00	0.96	5.96	0.00	0.24	83%
PT	Portugal	Passos Coelho I	0.00	0	0	0.00	0.06	6.61	0.00	0.91	89%
RO	Romania	Ponta III	0.00	0	0	0.60	0.04	3.57	1.00	0.91	89%
SK	Slovakia	Fico II	0.00	0	0	0.00	0.04	3.40	0.00	0.15	82%
SI	Slovenia	Cerar	0.00	0	0	0.00	0.99	3.26	0.00	0.51	85%
ES	Spain	Rajoy I	1.00	133	191	0.00	0.71	7.60	1.00	0.91	89%
SE	Sweden	Lofven I	1.00	300	0	0.90	0.03	3.40	1.00	0.15	82%
UK	United Kingdom	Cameron I	1.00	760	58	1.00	0.98	6.91	0.00	0.09	81%

Right Partisanship refers to governments' political position on a left-right scale. My estimate draws on partisanship data provided by the ParlGov database (Döring and Manow 2018) which in turn originates from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (Bakker et al. 2015). Since most of the EU-28 have coalition governments, parties' individual left-right scores and their parliamentary seat share was used to calculate a weighted left-right score for the overall government. The CHES "Irgen" variable runs from 0 for extreme left to 10 for extreme right. Using the direct method of calibration, this data was turned into fuzzy values where a score of 5 is a natural cross-over resulting in fuzzy values of 0.50, and 6.5 and 3.5 were used as upper and lower boundaries (fully inside and fully outside the set "rightist partisanship", respectively).

Parliamentary Veto Rights reflects a legislature's formal right to veto military deployments. The key distinction is whether or not a parliament enjoys the right to debate and decide upon military missions before the armed forces are dispatched. If such a right exists, the respective country is coded as 1, if not it is assigned a score of 0. My estimate primarily draws upon the ParlCon data set (Wagner et al. 2010) and subsequent updates (Wagner 2018), as well as data from the PAKS project (Dieterich et al. 2015; Hummel and Marschall 2007).¹¹ Of the EU-28 a total of 18 countries have parliamentary veto rights that apply to *ad hoc* coalition such as the anti-Daesh coalition. Notably, some countries adopt different procedures depending on whether an operation takes place within the institutional context of NATO, CFSP, or as part of an *ad hoc* coalition of countries.¹² Several countries have also amended their constitutions in recent years, such as Spain, France, and Italy.¹³

Public Opinion reflects citizens' attitudes towards the European Union's mutual defense clause, based on which all EU member states are obligated to use all means in their power to aid and assist another member state if that country has been attacked. My estimate draws on data from a Special Eurobarometer on the fight against terrorism, conducted in April 2016 (EPRS 2016). The survey collected responses from about 28,000 Europeans across all EU member states. One question asked specifically whether citizens viewed the mutual defense clause as a "good thing" or a "bad thing" (EPRS 2016, 50). Cases were considered "fully inside"

¹¹ These coding criteria mean that political conventions, such as in the UK where an informal veto right has emerged, are not considered to have the same strength as formal war powers (see Kaarbo and Kenealy 2016; Strong 2018).

¹² One example is Bulgaria, where a constitutional ruling in 2003 effectively removed mandatory parliamentary approval for NATO missions (Wagner et al. 2010, 39).

¹³ In Spain the constitutional amendment after the Iraq War led to a *de facto* parliamentary veto right (Wagner et al. 2017). Constitutional reform in France has given the parliament more rights, but these do not amount to a formal veto (Ostermann 2017). Italy lacked mandatory parliamentary approval when the anti-Daesh coalition was initiated, but the situation has changed with a new law that was passed in December 2016 (Coticchia and Vignoli 2018).

the set if 90% or more of the respondents saw the defense clause as a good thing. The 0.50 cross-over was set at the average response, which was 87%, whereas scores below 80% were considered fully outside the set.

Analysis

The first stage in the analytical procedure of QCA is testing for necessary conditions. Table 3 shows that none of the five included conditions passes the conventional threshold of 0.90 consistency and could thus be considered necessary for the outcome military participation against Daesh (Schneider and Wagemann 2012). This also holds for the negation (absence) of each of the conditions.

Table 3: Testing for Necessary Conditions

Condition	Presence			Absence		
	Consistency	Coverage	RoN	Consistency	Coverage	RoN
External Threat	0.791	0.600	0.769	0.209	0.119	0.460
Alliance Value	0.516	0.485	0.785	0.538	0.268	0.420
Rightist Partisanship	0.575	0.356	0.584	0.540	0.369	0.637
Parliamentary Veto Rights	0.352	0.178	0.403	0.648	0.590	0.814
Public Opinion	0.666	0.363	0.515	0.502	0.404	0.713

Note: RoN = Relevance of Necessity (Schneider and Wagemann 2012)

The second stage is the truth table analysis, which aims at identifying sufficient conditions that consistently lead towards the outcome of interest. Table 4 displays the truth table for the outcome military participation in the anti-Daesh coalition (MP) and the explanatory conditions external threat (T), alliance value (A), rightist partisanship (R), parliamentary veto rights (V), and public opinion (P). With five conditions, this explanatory model entails $2^5 = 32$ rows with combinations of conditions that are logically possible. As indicated in the table, row 20-32 are omitted, because these do not contain any empirical cases. These are *logical remainders*, which can be used to calculate solution terms.

As measures of fit, Table 4 shows “consistency”, which reflects the extent to which a row (combination of conditions) is sufficient for the outcome MP. The second indicator is “PRI”, which refers to the “proportional reduction in inconsistency”. This measure can help to identify ambiguous subset relationships, which can be the case if PRI is substantially lower than consistency (see Schneider and Wagemann 2012, 242).

To minimize the truth table and to derive solution terms, a cut-off point is set by the researcher. This indicates which rows are considered to be consistent enough to be included in the Boolean minimization procedure. Here, a natural break occurs between rows 7 and 8,

which reflects a threshold of 0.88 consistency. This means that the first seven rows are included in the minimization procedure and that the inconsistent row that contains Austria, Germany, and Ireland is not included in the further analysis.

Table 4: Truth Table for Military Participation in the anti-Daesh Coalition

Conditions					Outcome				
T	A	R	V	P	MP	N	Consistency	PRI	Country
1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1.000	1.000	United Kingdom
1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1.000	1.000	France
1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1.000	1.000	Denmark
1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1.000	1.000	Netherlands
1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1.000	1.000	Belgium
0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1.000	1.000	Poland
1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.887	0.857	Italy
1	0	1	1	0	0	3	0.388	0.259	Austria, Germany , Ireland
0	1	1	1	1	0	3	0.248	0.000	Belgium, Estonia, Hungary
0	0	0	1	1	0	3	0.125	0.000	Czech Republic, Luxembourg, Malta
1	0	1	1	1	0	2	0.324	0.000	Spain, Finland
0	1	0	1	1	0	2	0.245	0.000	Lithuania, Romania
0	0	1	0	1	0	2	0.142	0.000	Greece, Portugal
0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0.291	0.000	Latvia
1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0.278	0.071	Sweden
0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.179	0.000	Slovenia
0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0.178	0.000	Croatia
0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0.139	0.000	Cyprus
0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.096	0.000	Slovakia

Notes : T = External Threat, A = Alliance Value, R = Rightist Partisanship, V = Parliamentary Veto Rights, P = Public Opinion, MP = Military Participation, bold cases hold membership >0.50 in the outcome. Logical remainder rows are omitted (rows 20-32).

The third stage of the set-theoretic analysis with QCA is the minimization of the truth table. Based on a minimization algorithm, the software (“QCA” package in R) can derive three solution terms, which differ in how they treat logical remainders, resulting in more or less parsimonious/complex solutions. Table 5 displays the parsimonious solution term for the outcome military participation in the anti-Daesh coalition. The table shows three alternative “paths” toward this outcome. Each of these paths comprises different combinations of conditions, which are listed in the left-hand rows. I follow established notation, where black circles (“●”) refer to the presence of a condition and crossed-out circles (“⊗”) indicate a condition’s absence (Fiss 2011; Ragin and Fiss 2008). Below each path are listed the measures of fit, including coverage scores. These reflect how much of the empirical data is explained by each path. Moreover, the table list which countries/cases are covered by which path and which of these are solely accounted for by one individual path (bold font). The lower end of the table states the total solution consistency and coverage, and the number of models.

Table 5: Solution Paths for Military Participation in the anti-Daesh Coalition

	Path 1	Path 2	Path 3
External Threat	●		●
Alliance Value		●	●
Rightist Partisanship			
Parliamentary Veto Rights	⊗	⊗	
Public Opinion			●
Consistency	0.96	0.93	1.00
PRI	0.96	0.93	1.00
Raw Coverage	0.53	0.31	0.24
Unique Coverage	0.31	0.09	0.12
Covered Cases / Uniquely Covered Cases (Bold)	IT FR BE UK NL	PL UK NL	DK NL
Solution Consistency		0.94	
Solution PRI		0.94	
Solution Coverage		0.74	
Model (Total)		M1 (2)	

Note: Black circles indicate the presence of a condition, crossed-out circles its absence.

What do these results tell us about contributions to the anti-Daesh coalition? There are at least three findings worth outlining. First, it is apparent that all solution paths contain either an external threat (Path 1), or alliance value (Path 2), or both of these conditions (Path 3). This highlights the importance of international factors – as countries that contributed militarily either had foreign fighters in Iraq and Syria (many of which also experienced jihadi terrorism on their own soil), or they particularly valued their alliance relationship with the United States. Second, the results also show that many of those countries that made meaningful military contributions do not have legislatures with a veto right over military deployments. It is the absence of this institutional constraint that characterizes Path 1 and Path 2 (in combination with an external threat or alliance value, respectively). Finally, the set-theoretic analysis makes it apparent that partisanship did not yield any distinctive patterns. As discussed in previous sections, this is not too surprising, because the anti-Daesh coalition was neither a classic “left-wing” military mission, like a humanitarian military intervention, nor a “right-wing” strategic use of force, but a mixture of both without clear-cut partisan patterns.

Conclusion

This paper has analyzed military contributions of the EU-28 member states to the anti-Daesh coalition in Iraq and Syria. The results of the set-theoretic analysis foremost highlight the importance of *international* factors. When combined with either the absence of institutional constraints or a highly supportive public, then countries that contributed militarily did so because of the presence of an external threat or due to alliance considerations. Yet, it is also clear that *domestic* factors cannot be disregarded, especially institutional constraints like parliamentary war powers. These seem to have posed a constraint on executive decision-making, as only a single country with a legislative veto participated in the airstrikes (Denmark).¹⁴ Notably, partisanship did not seem to matter for decisions on coalition contributions.

That being said, there are several limitations in the present study. One apparent shortcoming is the focus on solely *military* contributions, while we know that many countries contributed substantial humanitarian aid, as part of their effort to defeat Daesh in Iraq and Syria. Prospective studies could combine military and civilian efforts to attain a more holistic view of the European Union member states' international engagements. Another aspect that could not be considered in this paper are coalition dynamics (Mello and Saideman 2019). We know that some countries initially abstained from military participation (e.g. Germany, Italy, and Poland – all of which joined with some delay) and others withdrew before the mission was completed (e.g. Belgium and Denmark). The chosen approach cannot depict these coalition dynamics,¹⁵ but the set-theoretic comparison could be complemented with individual case studies. For these, it might be particularly fruitful to investigate small states, as these seem to generate the most puzzling behavior.¹⁶

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¹⁴ By way of indirect support, Germany contributed Tornado aircraft equipped for reconnaissance operations.

¹⁵ On coalition withdrawal, see Tago (2009), Davidson (2014), and McInnis (2019).

¹⁶ Small states have lately received increased interest (e.g., Fonck et al. 2019; Oma and Petersson 2019; Schmitt 2018; 2019).

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