Decision-makers’ Use and Abuse of Human Rights

A study into the role of human rights in the political decision-making process leading up to Denmark’s military engagement in Iraq

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Abstract

The thesis critically assesses the decision-making process leading up to the acceptance of bill B 118 which approved Danish military action in the American-led multilateral coalition ‘Operation Iraqi Freedom’. The analysis will use coding through a qualitative content analysis to investigate the potential use and abuse of human rights framework by decision-makers, during this process. Theories of just war, activist military politics and the decision-making theory of perception and misperception are used to provide the foundation for the content analysis, as well as positioning the results in the context of the wider political sphere. Though the nature of the investigation does not allow for absolute conclusions, the findings demonstrated how human rights were indeed used as a tool of both persuasion in the hunt for support and as a means to legitimise actions.

Keywords: Danish foreign policy, just war theory, activist military politics, human rights, decision-making

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List of Abbreviations

ICISS – International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty
ICJ – International Court of Justice
ICCPR – International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR – International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ILC – International Law Commission
NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
UN – United Nations
UDHR – Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNGA – United Nations General Assembly
UNSC – United Nations Security Council
UNSCOM – United Nations Special Commission
USA – United States of America
WMD – Weapons of mass destruction
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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction to the topic

There are several examples of military intervention, by one or more states, done in spite of the wishes of the sovereign host state, in the name of humanitarianism and international peace and cooperation. In the decades since the end of the Cold War, many scholars and politicians alike, have argued for humanitarian interventions as a way of preventing genocides, civil wars or other crisis that are deemed grave enough. As a member of both the UN and NATO, Denmark has participated in many of these interventions, in some way or another. Danish military engagement has increased significantly in the past few decades. However, an argument has been made for a change in motivations of these engagements: the goal is no longer exclusively peacekeeping but more often also peacemaking. Present day Danish military action is aimed at promoting Danish interests and values – in some cases, through military intervention. As seen with the USA led Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003, the interventions are no longer limited to UN or NATO led/sanctioned operations but are carried out as transnational coalitions. Given Denmark’s traditional peacekeeping approach to military engagement, the argument for human rights would seem a compelling reason to justify getting involved in international conflict – is this the case however? Would in-depth analysis of materials documenting the decision-making process show that human rights were in fact the reason why Denmark got involved through military action in an otherwise controversial war?

1.2 Purpose and aim

The recently published report ‘Hvorfor gik Danmark I Krig?’ (Why did Denmark go to war?) by Mariager and Wivel (2019a, 2019b, 2019c and 2019d), examined the broader historical background and political context to conclude on why Denmark decided to engage in some of the wars/conflicts that have started since the end of the Cold War-era. Building on the finding of this report in combination with other previous research, the aim of this thesis is to contribute with knowledge of the role of human rights specifically in the decision-making process by Danish politicians leading up to the passing on bill B 118, which justified and approved Danish military participation in Operation Iraqi Freedom.
1.3 Research questions

How did human rights influence the Danish decision-makers leading up to bill B 118 justifying Danish military involvement in Operation Iraqi Freedom?

1.4 Relevance for the field of human rights

The research area of the decision-makers’ use and abuse of human rights in the decision-making process specifically in the context of Denmark’s military engagement in Iraq is related to human rights in different ways. Military operations and war always involve many human rights concerns, including the rights of the civilians in the host state as well as the rights of the soldiers fighting for either side. Rights which may be infringed upon in such a situation are numerous and often tied together, thus making it an extremely difficult situation. Civil and political rights, economic, social and cultural rights as well as minority rights of any number of people may be violated in times of war and unrest. Human rights violation may occur before international intervention, but certainly also both during and after such interventions.

This thesis also explores the more general use, and possible reliance upon, of human rights language when justifying interventions. As will become evident from the analysis, human rights can serve as a great tool to persuade people(s), politicians and other decision-makers to do or refrain from doing certain things. This persuasive power thus raises questions of how human rights ought to be used versus how they are actually used in practice. The thesis therefore contributes to the field of human rights research, by examining a concrete example of how human rights language may function as a tool to justify military operations.

1.5 Delimitations

This analysis in this thesis is confined to the case of Denmark and thus will not attempt to make any conclusions regarding the foreign policies and/or military engagements of other countries, that may be mentioned within as a means to further explain the Danish case. Furthermore, the thesis will be focused solely on the foreign policy and war efforts related to Operation Iraqi Freedom, started in 2003. It should be acknowledged that the conclusions drawn from this investigation may therefore differ from than those which could be drawn had the investigation focused on another point in time or another war(s), even if the same approach and method was used. The historical background given in relation to previous research, is similarly also limited to the events relevant to establish a timeline and basic understanding of the political context in
which the Danish decisions were made. This means that no background or analysis of the war in Iraq itself will be provided in this thesis as it lies beyond the scope.

The meaning of human rights and what they might entail, will for the purpose of this thesis be restricted to those set out in UN human rights documents such as the UDHR, the ICCPR and the ICESCR. Significant amounts of research questioning the validity and universality of these documents has been made, however such a discussion was deemed outside the scope for this thesis.

For this thesis, the use of the phrase “military involvement” or similar wordings such as “military power” or “military politics” are used under the definition of: ‘the use of military power to uphold defence and security policies’ (Rickli, 2008: 7).

It should also be noted, that materials selected for this investigation in the form of articles, debates, speeches, legal documents and internal state documents, etc. will be selected based on relevance, availability and, in some cases, legibility, hence the results may show a degree of subjectivity. The purpose of the thesis is to investigate influences during the decision-making process leading up to bill B 118, thus the bill itself will not be discussed or considered. Such an analysis would require a decision-maker’s choice theoretical approach, and this is also outside the limits and scope of this study.

1.6 Chapter outline

Following this introductory chapter, the thesis contains 5 more chapters. Chapter 2 briefly examines the historical background and significant developments leading up to the Danish decision to provide military forces to Operation Iraqi Freedom, before mapping relevant previous research on Danish foreign policy and humanitarian warfare. Chapter 3 outlines the theories used in this thesis; the theoretical starting points are the just war theory, activist theory and the decision-making theory of perception and misperception. In chapter 4, the methodological framework is presented: firstly, by outlining the qualities and stages of qualitative content analysis and secondly by discussing the choice of materials. Chapter 5 contains the operationalisation table and further analysis based on the methodological approach. Lastly, chapter 6 is a concluding chapter also containing ideas for future research.

Chapter 2: Previous research and historical background
In order to better understand the political context, both external and internal, in which the decision-making process leading up to bill B 118 is situated, this chapter will provide a brief outline of the historical background. Following this will be a description of relevant previous research into Danish foreign policy analysis specifically and humanitarian interventions and the legitimacy of military action more generally.

2.1 Historical background

The purpose of this section is to provide a brief outline of the events, in Iraq and the international community, leading up to the acceptance of the Danish bill B 118, in order to better understand the political motivations and context of the situation.

On February 17th, 1998, the Danish parliament accepted bill B 114 regarding the potential Danish contributions to military operations in Iraq. The language of the bill indicates that Danish contributions to such an operation, would only be relevant if the international community so agreed. On March 21st, 2003, bill B 118 regarding Denmark’s military involvement in the multilateral operation in Iraq was accepted – in spite of the UNSC resolution 1441 of November 8th, 2002, not explicitly giving authorisation for an invasion (Mariager and Wivel, 2019a: 245). Throughout these processes there were two different governments in Denmark. Bill B114 was accepted under a coalition government consisting of the Social Democratic Party and bill B 118 was approved under the Liberal/Conservative coalition government (Schmidt in Mariager and Wivel, 2019c: 62).

From the 1960s up until the invasion in 2003, the most significant party in Iraq was the Baath party, who gained control following a coup in 1963 (Schmidt in Mariager and Wivel, 2019c: 44). In 1979, Saddam Hussein took over as President of Iraq and conditions in the country changed rather drastically. State funded education and hospitals, welfare programs and improving infrastructure, was replaced by a ‘republic of fear’, where persecutions, executions, and surveillance became integrated into society (Schmidt in Mariager and Wivel, 2019c: 45).

In terms of foreign policy, Saddam Hussein’s long-term goal was to make Iraq a regional superpower, hence making himself leader of a united Arabic country. To reach this goal, Hussein initiated modernisation programs of Iraq’s existing armed forces, but programs to development and produce WMD were also established throughout the 1970s and 1980s (Schmidt in Mariager and Wivel, 2019c: 46). After the Gulf War ended in 1991, the Bush administration in the USA, and later the Clinton administration, implemented a strategy of “aggressive containment”, consisting of three elements: military pressure, economic sanctions
and the elimination of WMD through the UNSCOM. The UNSCOM was established through UNSC resolution 687, adopted on April 3rd, 1991 (UN, 1991). Resolution 687 served as a reminder to Iraq, of its obligations under the Geneva Protocol which prohibits the use of chemical and biological weapons and furthermore, the resolution demanded that Iraq may not acquire or develop nuclear weapons (Schmidt in Mariager and Wivel, 2019c: 53). In spite of initially accepting the terms of the resolution, Iraq eventually refused access to the UNSCOM, resulting in the UNSC resolution 1134, October 23rd, 1997 (UN, 1997), which condemned the actions of the Iraqi government and demanded their cooperation. After a few months of cooperation, the UNSCOM was again denied access and were exposed to increasing harassment, resulting in USA’s President Clinton declaring that diplomatic measures were nearly exhausted. Following this, the Danish government were asked for military assistance in a potential USA-led coalition operation against Iraq from the SACEUR, General Wesley Clark, on February 11th, 1998 (Schmidt in Mariager and Wivel, 2019c: 60). This request by Denmark’s great power ally eventually resulted in bill B 114. The analysis within this thesis is of the decision-making process related to the passing of bill B 118, and so is based on documents dated after the acceptance of bill B 114.

2.2 Denmark’s Foreign Policy

Research of Danish foreign affairs and war politics have traditionally used an adaptation theory framework which demonstrates the significance placed on the external forces such as international cooperation in Danish foreign policies. The recently published research by Mariager and Wivel will be outlined and discussed below, as it not only addresses previous research into Danish adaptation within foreign policy and war politics but incorporates it into their own research. Since the analysis in this thesis is done using the sources published alongside this research, discussing this book and their findings seemed particularly relevant.

2.2.1 ‘Hvorfor gik Danmark i krig?’

The purpose of the book ‘Hvorfor gik Danmark i krig?’ (translation: why did Denmark go to war?) is to describe, analyse and draw upon lessons learned by Denmark’s military engagements in Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan. The book is primarily concerned with the definitions of military engagement and how military engagement relates to other parts of foreign policy and thus international relationships (2019a: 64). Through thorough analysis and combing through thousands of previously classified documents, Mariager and Wivel are able
show exactly what information the Danish authorities received from other countries, intelligence services etc.; the significance said information ended up having in the internal decision-making process; what information was passed on by the government – Poul Nyrup Rasmussen’s Social Democratic/Social-Liberal coalition government from 1998-2001 and Anders Fogh Rasmussen’s Liberal/Conservative coalition government from 2001-2003 – to the rest of parliament; and furthermore, what information was passed on to the public (2019a: 22).

The book has three general conclusions. Firstly, Denmark’s military engagement generally reflects the pollical decision-makers’ will to accommodate what was asked by the USA concerning military contributions. Rather than be a result of pressure, in the form of threats of sanctions or the like, from the USA, the decisions seem to be based on the Danish politicians’ desire to accommodate American preferences (2019a: 22). Secondly, Denmark’s military contributions in the three wars were shaped along the way as opposed to a single ultimate decision. All decisions from getting involved in the first place to how such an involvement would look and what it would include, were reached through long processes and correspondences between various interested parties – including, but not limited to, several ministers and their advisors, representatives from all parts of the Danish military, as well as international alliances, especially the USA. Thirdly, the book concludes that the flow of information between the government of the time and the parliament was mainly conducted through informal channels such as simple briefings between party leaders and/or relevant ministers and advisors. ‘Regeringen har en minimalistisk informationspraksis over for det Udenrigspolitiske Nævn, hvor Nævnet gives den information, som det skal ifølge grundloven’ (author’s translation: the government has a minimalistic informational approach regarding the Foreign Policy Council, in which the Council receives the information it must in accordance with the constitution) (2019a: 23). To further build on this quote, it is noted throughout the book how the Foreign Policy Council was often, if not usually, not informed or consulted regarding any ongoing or upcoming decision-making process concerning potential military engagement, until they absolutely had to be; at which point it seems the decisions were already made, but simply lacked the stamp of approval from the Council. This only further stresses the point made in the first conclusion, that the decisions were ultimately made by a small number of decision-makers, who, albeit after a long process of gathering information from numerous sources, looked to accommodate the interests of Denmark’s international alliances.
2.3 The ‘Responsibility to Protect’, Humanitarian Warfare and Necessity

Proponents of humanitarian interventions, through measures such as the ‘responsibility to protect’, often base their claims on human rights and their (supposed) universal moral principles, as transcending territorial borders; thus, providing a valid justification for intervention and potentially military engagement (Chesterman, 2001) and making it valid to discuss the key aspects of these concepts in the context of this thesis.

The concept of ‘responsibility to protect’ has quickly developed from an idea put forth by an independent commission of experts to being unanimously endorsed by the UNGA (ICISS). Presently, it has been referred to in numerous resolutions by both the UNSC and the UNGA and been frequently invoked by states and non-state actors such as NGOs and the media to justify and/or condemn behaviour and, accordingly, to advocate for or deter international action (Glanville, 2012: 2). The responsibility to protect applies to the four mass atrocity crimes: genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleaning and crimes against humanity. The ‘responsibility to protect’ is twofold: states have a responsibility to protect their own populations from mass atrocities; and bystander states (the international community) have a collective responsibility to assist in situations where a state is failing to protect its own population (Glanville, 2012: 4).

The first half of the concept is already widely embedded in existing international law, including universal and regional human rights conventions, thus proving its international popularity. In 2011, even Russia and China, two of the permanent members of the UNSC who have a history of opposing UNSC decisions allowing for military interventions in cases without consent of the involved sovereign state, The responsibility to protect one’s own population is further built upon in Chapter VII of the UN Charter to include the notion that other states may hold states accountable for performing this duty (UN Charter). The second proposition of the concept, concerning extraterritorial protection of populations, is set up as a positive duty on all states, rather than a moral obligation. Although this is significantly less well established in existing international law, declarations by both the ICJ and ILC point towards a change in the legal obligations of states to act in “all” situations. In August 2001, the ILC adopted the Draft Articles on Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts (hereinafter “draft articles”). Article 25 therein, reads as follows:

1. Necessity may not be invoked by a State as a ground for precluding the wrongfulness of an act not in conformity with an international obligation of that State unless the act:

   (a) Is the only way for the State to safeguard an essential interest against a grave and imminent peril; and
(b) Does not seriously impair an essential interest of the State or States towards which the obligation exists, or of the international community as a whole.

2. In any case, necessity may not be invoked by a State as a ground for precluding wrongfulness if:

(a) The international obligation in question excludes the possibility of invoking necessity; or

(b) The State has contributed to the situation of necessity.

The above-quoted Article from the draft articles, although stating that there are indeed circumstances where sovereignty and territorial integrity may be overruled, it does little to engage with the pre-existing political conflict of those state rights versus human rights and humanitarian law. Harhoff has further explored this conflict and lists examples of situations which could be considered as being within the scope of ‘grave and imminent peril’ as put forth in Article 25 of the draft articles, ergo potentially legitimising humanitarian action under other circumstances than the four mass atrocity crimes covered by responsibility to protect. Harhoff lists the following: the commission of genocide, serious violations of the international humanitarian law applicable to internal armed conflicts, widespread or systematic attacks on civilian population, or serious violations of recognised and fundamental international human rights standards’ (2001: 114). Though these categories are not accepted in international law as permissive of humanitarian interventions, they are worth considering in relation to the just war theory explained in section 3.1 and the strong yet undefinable pull human rights have as an argument regardless of it not being founded and meticulously defined in law warranting intervention.

2.4 Situating the thesis in the previous research
Research concerning Danish military politics so far has had a strong focus on the relationship between Denmark and its international alliances and the implications and effects of these relationships. Because of this general focus on foreign policy, there is a research gap concerning the details of specific decisions. This thesis builds upon foundations of Danish foreign policy, particularly war politics, that has already been researched. By changing the perspective from war philosophy or foreign policy analysis, to human rights language however, it should be possible to see how human rights violations – such as has often been the case in Denmark’s war politics historically – rather than national security or noncompliance arguments
– as were used by some of the other countries in the coalition – were used to justify intervention in Iraq.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, the theories chosen will be presented and discussed in the following order: just war theory, activist theory and the perception and misperception theory. The inductive research conducted in this thesis, is shaped by the theories described in this chapter. Just war theory and activist theory is used to provide a foundation for understanding what human rights as legitimate justification for intervention entails. Just war theory and activist theory are therefore used at the decontextualization stage of the method, as presented in section 4., to create codes for further analysis. This foundation functions as a pre-existing framework for the application of the perception and misperception theory, which is concerned with the decision-making process itself.

3.1 Just War Theory

In analysing the use of human rights in justifying Denmark’s military involvement in Iraq, the just war theory will provide a foundation for understanding the general process of determining whether military operations are justified and the role of human rights in legitimising actions. Although the theory has been around for as long as war has in some form or another, it has changed significantly. For the purpose of this thesis, only variations of the just war theory since the early 1960s will be taken into consideration, as these were deemed most applicable in the light of the previous research this thesis builds upon in combination with the aim of the thesis. The just war theory specifies the foundation on which nations seek to legally and morally justify going to war, *jus ad bellum*, as well as the conditions of how the war ought to be fought, *jus in bello*. Walzer proposes that the only justification for going to war is the defence of two basic human rights: the right to life and the right to liberty (1977: 72). These two rights could be labelled as natural rights, as they are granted to us by virtue of being born. Natural rights can thus to argued as being “universal” however, Walzer argues against calling them “absolute rights” as this would imply, they should under no circumstances be violated, which is not necessarily the case according to this theory. Rather, Walzer concludes that actions which would allow justifiable violation of these rights exist but are subject to strict scrutiny – including situations of conflict and/or war. Building on this definition of individual rights, the
just war theory also addresses the rights of states. This particular discussion is also relevant for answering the research question of this thesis, as the legitimacy of military interventions is so closely linked to the issues of sovereignty and when sovereignty may be disregarded. In relation to the rights of states, just war theory considers the right to territorial integrity and the right to political sovereignty as being founded in the rights of the individual to life and liberty; whatever communal rights a community, such as a state, might have is depended upon the rights of the individuals within the community. The role of governments then becomes to protect the rights of their citizens ‘at both the international and intranational levels’ (Dubik, 1982: 363). Building on previous research of humanitarian warfare and legitimate grounds for interventions as defined through various international legal documents, this theory places the responsibility of defining and protecting human rights upon the international community.

It should be noted that Walzer’s account of the just war theory also discusses the troubling claim that an individual, forfeits his natural rights when he becomes a soldier. This branch of the theory is widely debated amongst scholars and will not be considered in this thesis. The thesis relies on the – within just war theory – more commonly accepted UNDH for the definition of human rights, in which there are no distinctions between civilians’ and soldiers’ rights. Furthermore, the purpose of using just war theory for this research, is to provide a set of guidelines for how wars in general are justified and legitimised and in particular how this is done using human rights, so as to generate codes for the qualitative content analysis. The use of human rights as a general umbrella term and UNDH definition thereof, makes discussions over rightsholders and the details of specific rights, unnecessary.

Critics of the theory have argued that it simply provided an excuse, a way of making war morally possible however, Walzer argues that it makes ‘war possible in a world where war was, sometimes, necessary’ (2004).

3.2 Theory of Activist Military Politics

Although various versions of what exactly an “activist” approach to foreign and security politics exist, scholars of foreign policy seem to agree that this is the ideal way to describe Danish military politics since the Cold War. Attempting to unite these differing views on the subject, Wivel identifies three fundamental characteristics of the Danish activist military politics.

The first characteristic describes the way in which Danish foreign policy-makers seek to promote a set of values through the international operations they choose to participate in.
Values such as common security, human rights and democracy promotion, and sustainable development serve as the ideational foundation of most, recent Danish foreign and security politics (Wivel, 2013: 300).

The second characteristic of this approach to military politics, concern the global context of the Danish contributions to international peace. Danish foreign policy is increasingly viewed in either a European or International context at all times, which makes sense when considered in connection to the traditional approach to international affairs taken by small states. Building on this assumption, Wivel contend that while peace promotion may be viewed by great powers as being naturally integrated into its policies regarding the world order and the promotion of its interests, foreign policies of small states tend to only be impacted by peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts, in times when there is no threat to national security (2013: 302-304).

The way in which small states are then able to implement any kinds of ideas about the international order and securing international peace, relies on the small state’s ability to create alliances – particularly with great powers.

The last characteristic of activist theory evident in Danish foreign policy, is the militarisation of Denmark’s peacebuilding efforts. Under this theory, military actions are considered to be legitimate means in an ideational pursuit of internationally identified objectives.

Relating back to the conventional methods of small states in the international arena, those three characteristics are specific to the Danish case in that they both undermine what is expected of a small state, yet at the same time confirm Denmark’s status as being “support” to great powers, such as the USA of the United Kingdom, which Denmark typically allies themselves with (Wivel, 2013: 305). Small states have a tendency to lie low in relation to their position on international policies until an alliance surrounding ones views has formed and can be joined; however, although Denmark’s long history of humanitarian interventions has always been founded in some kind of international cooperation – be it multilateral or institutionalised – their contributions have always been made within the specific framework of value promotion, no matter the “official” goal of the operation. Small states often prefer diplomatic solutions and rely on international cooperation, as they have very little pull in the international political arena; nonetheless, Denmark has participated in several wars, with and without UN or NATO authorisation.
3.3 Foreign Policy Analysis: Perception and Misperception Theory

Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA), as laid out by Beach, investigates the relationship between the international system and foreign policy, in combination with looking at different decision-making processes (2012: 5). For the purpose of answering the research question of this thesis, the FPA approach will be the state-level decision-making explanatory theory of perception and misperception. State-level theories help explain divergent behaviour of specific states (Beach, 2012: 13); previous research has already concluded that Denmark’s decision to join the military coalition operation in Iraq was somewhat odd when compared to the country’s history of activist small state foreign policy, therefore this theory should prove useful in determining the cause and motivations behind this “unlikely” decision. Decision-making theories such as the theory of perception and misperception – hereafter referred to as PM – are particularly appropriate for analysing the causal effects of individual decisions, as is the case with this thesis. Combining a state-level approach with the decision-making approach will then provide a good starting point for analysing how human rights have influenced the decision-making process leading up to bill B 118.

Beach divides the process of decision-making in the sphere of foreign policy into two distinct phases: ‘(1) the collection and processing of information about the choice situation and (2) the decision-taking stage’ (Beach, 2012: 97). The PM theory is concerned with how the world is perceived and made sense of, in the minds of decision-makers and subsequently how this affects the choices they make. As explained by Beach, leaders and other decision-makers are bound to be subjective to some degree as they are influenced by their personal beliefs about political life, the international community, the efficacy of various types of actions or non-actions, etc. In this context, misperceptions are therefore defined as ‘a discrepancy between the psychological environment of the decision makers and the operational environment of the “real world”’ (Beach, 2012: 97). The theory outlines four common sources of misperceptions that are likely to influence the decision-making process: (1) categorise and stereotype; (2) simplify causal inferences; (3) historical analogies; and (4) confirmation bias and the rejection of dissonance. The following sections will further elaborate upon these four categories and how they were relevant for creating operational codes in the qualitative content analysis.

3.2.1 Categorise and stereotype

Cognitive psychology explains how the human mind has a tendency to categorise and stereotype both our view of ourselves and of our surroundings. These views are not necessarily
reflective of reality: self-images are often more generous and positive and images of people(s) considered to rivals or opponents may be unjustly negative (Beach, 2012: 111). Once formed, these views may be hard to change. This creates a situation where one might reformulate or even reject new information about one’s own position or that of opponents, if this information was initially inconsistent with one’s existing view.

3.2.2 Simplify causal inferences
Whereas the human mind overemphasises the external effects on one’s own behaviour, when it comes to the actions of others, these are usually seen as both planned and intentional (Beach, 2012: 112). Translating this to the realm of foreign policy, this phenomenon can be seen in countless of examples of attributing intention when there was none. Decision-makers are furthermore often quick to remark how their decisions effected positive change and how those decisions were not influenced by external pressure, yet when others behave undeniably, the causes for this behaviour are too often simplified and tied to internal disruptions rather than the potential effect of one’s own actions upon the other.

3.2.3 Historical analogies
Related to simplifying the individual causes upon decisions, the PM theory also stipulates that decision-makers simplify reality and political context through the use of historical analogies. Historical analogies can be useful in deciphering substantial amounts of relevant information. By drawing lessons learned from previous events, decision-makers may better understand the nature of present-day problems, including the potential dangers and pitfalls of certain types decisions. Khong described this type of reasoning misperception as: ‘event A resembles event B in having characteristic X; A also has characteristic Y; therefore, it is inferred that B also has characteristic Y’ (Khong 1992: 7). Historical analogies can consequently shape the assumptions of the decision-makers and have significant causal impact on foreign policy – including war politics (Beach, 2012: 112). While lessons of history may certainly provide valuable insight, event B will never be an exact copy of event A. Overreliance on historical comparisons can thusly lead to decision-makers, particularly within the field of military politics, to make potentially catastrophic decisions.
3.2.4 Confirmation bias and the rejection of dissonance

The last of the common misperceptions listed by the PM theory considers how decision-makers ‘ignore information and avoid situations that produce dissonance with existing beliefs and images’ (Beach, 2012: 114). This fourth source of misconception combines the other three: general stereotyping, bias on the level of the individual and broader historical and political context. This again relates to how information needed to understand the situation requiring a decision is filtered and used but occurs in the final stages of the decision-making process. Actors involved in the process tend to have a strong confirmation bias and ‘seek to believe that the reasons for acting or deciding as they did were overwhelming’ (Beach, 2012: 114), thus making their decisions legitimate and valid. Accepting this argument and relating it to military politics, suggests that decision-makers involved in the making of bill B 118 were already predisposed to reaching a specific conclusion.

Chapter 4: Methodology and Materials

The aim of this thesis is to investigate how human rights might have influenced the decision-makers leading up to bill B 118 justifying Danish military involvement in Operation Iraqi Freedom. This chapter will provide a detailed explanation of the methodology used to conduct the research. First, the aspects and stages of a qualitative content analysis will be outlined. Secondly, the implications of this choice of method will be discussed. Finally, the choice of materials to be analysed will be presented and defended.

4.1 Qualitative Content Analysis

The methodological tool used to explore the research problem of this thesis, is a qualitative content analysis. Qualitative content analysis allows the researcher to relate and validate inferences from texts to the contexts in which they were used (Krippendorff, 2004: 18). This type of research is thus characterised by the focus on in-depth analysis and understanding of words and opinions. Qualitative analysis makes relatively objective analysis of political documents possible, as the coding is done systematically, thus eliminating selective reading of texts. Another characteristic of qualitative research is the focus on an individual case, as opposed to a general picture, making this method an excellent match for answering the research question of this study.
The texts used for the analysis in this thesis, were selected using the relevance sampling technique. Other forms of sampling such as cluster, snowball or systemic sampling, are sampled according to their sources, situations or time periods (Krippendorff, 2004: 119). The texts used here however, are not meant to be representative of the general approach to decision-making in Danish foreign policy, and so texts containing relevant information were identified and defined by the analytical problem at hand.

Answering the research question relies on the examination of a body of text in relation to a broader context and the theories chosen will provide the systemic context for creating the codes and for understanding the relation to the political situation in which they exist. Previous research related to the topic of this thesis has been conducted using broader foreign policy analysis, analysis of historical developments and/or parts of the more general relationship between war and human rights. Using this particular methodological framework in combination with the theoretical approaches of Just War Theory and PM theory, will thus provide a new dimension to the debates surrounding Denmark’s military involvement in Iraq, as it allows for an in depth and detailed discussion of how specifically human rights influenced the decision-making process.

In qualitative content analysis, words and themes represent the data, and coding is the data making method used to search for these words, themes and commonalities in various material. For this thesis, a range of different kinds of documents will be analysed. Using the principles of coding, the texts will be reduced to themes, their meaning, their relation to each other and the role they play in relation to the documents themselves as well as to the wider context of the decision-making process. The coding themes will be decided upon using the Just War theory and PM theory and they will be presented in an operationalisation table in section 5.1.

Conducting a qualitative content analysis can essentially be boiled down to four stages (Bengtsson, 2015: 9). The processes involved in each of these stages are as follows:

Stage 1 Decontextualisation: at this initial stage, the material is read with the sole purpose of understanding what is going on. Familiarising oneself with the data is crucial in order to create appropriate meaning units. Meaning units are the smallest unit of data which still contains valuable insight – in this study, the meaning units will be quotes from the documents which are analysed. The meaning units represent the variables which are used to answer the research question.

Stage 2 Recontextualisation: after identifying meaning units, these are then read alongside the original text. This is done primarily to ensure all relevant aspects of the content is covered.
by the meaning units identified at stage 1 but also to doublecheck that the meaning units are in fact representative of the text samples.

Stage 3 Categorisation: this stage condenses the meaning units to key words and concepts, thereby structuring them in sub-categories. Relevant key-words and concepts are identified using the theoretical framework.

Stage 4 Compilation: now that the sub-categories have been established, their relation to one another and to the context of answering the research question can be explored. This thesis is a manifest analysis, so each theme and the underlying sub-category will be examined in close connection to the original text. After this thorough analysis of individual components found in the operationalisation table in relation to the literature, is may be appropriate to show perform some quantification to fully comprehend the magnitude of the phenomena studied – this was indeed found to be appropriate for this thesis and is presented in section 5.3.

4.2 Implications of the choice of method

Criticisms of qualitative methods are often based on questions such as validity and reliability. On the matter of validity, when using this methodology validity is determined based on the relationship between the theory and the data. Seeing as qualitative research is designed to ensure a strong connection between data, external context and theory, this thesis proves its validity through the extensive analysis in chapter 5.

Because of the individuality of the focus for this qualitative content analysis, perfect reliability is not achievable. Since the data is a result of a particular theoretical approach combined with a specific context, the produced data are a reflection of just those circumstances. Reproducing this study using the same materials might produce a different outcome if other theories were applied or the theories evolved (Just War Theory in particular, has evolved greatly over time and will likely continue to do so); in a situation where the theories remained unchanged, the outcome might change as new materials could be produced or additional materials may be declassified; even in a scenario where exactly the same theories were applied and only these materials were analysed, a different outcome could still be the result, as this method uses a relevance sampling approach, which is likely to show some degree of personal bias. Subjectivity in general is one of the cons of choosing a qualitative method, due to the high levels of personal involvement of the researcher, in the sampling and coding processes. This however, does not make a qualitative study inherently unreliable. The research conducted for
this thesis, relies on Silverman’s propositions for making it as reliable as possible (2006). Silverman suggests that the whole research process should be displayed, including explanations of theory and all the stages of the methodology, so that the research would be easy to replicate. To strengthen the reliability, he also argues that the actual materials used should be readily available, rather than summaries or generalisations mentioned throughout one’s analysis and/or operational table. The theories chosen and the methodological approach has been thoroughly explained in chapter 3 and 4.1 respectively. Thereby, following Silverman’s guidelines, this thesis should be as reliable as is possible for a qualitative study.

4.3 Materials
The primary material for the analysis within this thesis consists 13 different documents published in connection with the book ‘Hvorfor gik Danmark i krig?’ by Mariager and Wivel, sampled using the relevance sampling method. These documents include notes from meetings between various government agencies, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defence, meeting minuets from discussions in parliament and within and between relevant political parties. Several of these documents were only declassified during the process of the Mariager and Wivel’s research, thus an in-depth analysis of their content such as the content analysis in this thesis, has never been possible before. The documents sampled for the analysis are all originally in Danish, therefore the quotes are always translated by the author. It is the responsibility of the researcher to make accurate translations that are not subjectively influenced by the aim of the analysis. Being a native Danish speaker with considerable training in academic English, the translations made by author should be accurate, reliable and as objective as humanly possible.

Secondary material is a range of scholarly articles, identified by relevance to answering the research question based on the theoretical framework.

Chapter 5: Analysis
This section presents the findings of the content analysis of the documents. The aim is to explore how human rights influenced the decision-making process of Danish politicians leading up to the passing on bill B 118, which justified and approved Danish military participation in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Through a manifest analysis, each theme was approached using the four guiding stages of the qualitative content analysis process outlined by Bengtsson. First will be a presentation of the operationalisation table used to categorise
important passages and quotes found in the material and then assign each of them to the appropriate code. In the sections which follow, each of the four themes will be analysed deeper, relating the theoretical framework to the quotes. The operationalisation table is provided before these sections, so this may serve as a reference point and provide an overview of the analytical process for the reader. It should be acknowledged that a sub-category’s membership of one theme, does not preclude membership of another; nor does it guarantee that the same coding, “Human rights related” or “Not human rights related” will apply to the same sub-category across different themes.

5.1 Operationalisation table

The operationalisation table below was created based on the theoretical framework provided by the just war theory, activist theory and PM theory. As the aim of the thesis is primarily concerned with the effects of x on the decision-making process, the four overarching themes are based on PM theory. X being the variable we are measuring – human rights arguments – is visible in the meaning units and condensed meaning units. Reading the table from left to right allows the reader to: firstly identify the theme which is being investigated; secondly read examples of meaning units containing insights related to the research question; thirdly to see how those insights fit into the language and concepts of the theoretical framework; and lastly, to see whether the unit has been coded as being “human rights related” or “not human rights related”. Depending on one’s theoretical perspective, almost any situation and all actions, by individuals and/or states, could be considered as, and thus coded as, “Human rights related”. The theoretical framework of just war theory limits the definition of human rights, to those which are defined in UN documents.

It should again be noted, that the original documents are in Danish, hence the quotes in table 1 are author translations. The quotes in the table are referenced with a number and page number. All documents can be found in Mariager and Wivel, 2019d and the numbers of the
references in the operationalisation table correspond to the numbers assigned to each document in this book.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Keywords related to each theme</th>
<th>Meaning units (examples of statements which fit into the category); translated by author</th>
<th>Condensed meaning units organised by sub-categories</th>
<th>Code (to limit the categories)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme 1: categorise and stereotype</td>
<td>'…Iraq cannot account for 31000 chemical weapons...it is believed Iraq is in possession of 17 tons biological matter...which, if spread in a densely populated area, could kill 3 million people…' (51: 258)</td>
<td>WMD and the effect on people – civilians and military personnel</td>
<td>Human rights related</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'…its very unfortunate that Iraq continues to be uncooperative [in relation to WMD destruction]…' (51: 259)</td>
<td>Iraq being uncooperative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive and negative stereotypes</td>
<td>'The security threat towards military units in potential operations in Iraq, would be significantly higher than in Afghanistan. This is partially due to the risk of chemical and biological weapons being used. It has however been determined, that it should be possible to secure necessary protection [of military personnel] procedures.' (55: 273)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rejection of new information based on preconceived categories</td>
<td>'In addition, is the threat of chemical and biological weapons Iraq is thought to be in possession of…' (61: 301)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'This has been the goal for years in Denmark’s “Iraq policy” and in the efforts to stop the spread of WMD’ (57: 282)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'At the same time, “monitoring” has led to reasonable assumptions concerning the Iraqi military hiding WMD’ (63: 305)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'The American initiative [for a multilateral coalition] does not push us [the international community and Iraq] towards war…rather it could be an important step towards a peaceful solution.’ (57: 283)</td>
<td>Peacekeeping</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘…Danish contribution to keeping the peace and…promote a peaceful solution through the UN…’ (65: 323)</td>
<td>Peaceful solution</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘…the more the country [Iraq] chooses to cooperate [with the UN], the quicker the suffering of the civilian population will cease.’ (51: 259)</td>
<td>Suffering of the civilian population</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
‘To do otherwise, would serve to undermine the vision of international legal order, which has been the cornerstone of Danish foreign policy for the last 60 years’ (71: 340)

‘[in that scenario] Saddam Hussein would be still be standing. He would be more dangerous than ever. He would not stop until he had caused great divides in the international order.’ (71: 341)

‘Basically, since the initial acceptance of truce, Iraq has attempted to evade their commitments’ (51: 257)

‘The Minister of Foreign Affairs [of Denmark] added that he was not familiar with any…remarks from the American administration regarding Hans Blix [UNSCOM inspector]. Perhaps however, negative articles could have been written about him in the USA. There is obviously freedom of speech in the USA.’ (60: 296)

‘It is the government’s [of Denmark] opinion that there is no doubt that Powell’s [American Secretary of State] account was severely damaging for Iraq. (63: 307)

‘…he [Danish Minister of Foreign Affairs] was unaware of whether Powell passed on the information [of their “monitoring”] to the UNSCOM…he was however, of the impression that America generally cooperated with the UNSCOM’ (63: 311)

### Theme 2: simplify causal inferences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal intent versus the result external pressure</th>
<th>Simplifying causes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘We [the international community] cannot allow Saddam to divide the international community’s efforts against WMD…then his [Saddam Hussein] mission would succeed.’ (51: 259)</td>
<td>‘…it is the American view that there is cause for concern regarding Iraqi WMD falling into the hands of terror networks and that there is clear evidence of connections between the Iraqi regime and Al-Qaida [terror organisation].’ (63: 306)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| ‘In addition: massive humanitarian help. A united Danish contribution of both military and humanitarian aid is important’ (69: 335) | International community related Human rights related|
| Connections to terror organisations | Danish traditional course of action |
| Exaggerating one’s role in positive changes | ‘…the Minister of Foreign Affairs [of Denmark] stressed the importance of not just contributing with military forces, but also with humanitarian aid…’ (63: 309) | Humanitarian aid |
| | ‘…there has been continuous contact with various humanitarian organisations…’ (63: 312) | Humanitarian crisis |
| | ‘…it is evident, that a humanitarian crisis is imminent…’ (65: 325) | |
| | ‘It is impossible to accurately guess the potential humanitarian consequences in the event of military conflict in Iraq. The expectation that these could be great however, is widely accepted.’ (65: 326) | |
| | ‘The government [of Denmark] has decided that Denmark will contribute with significant humanitarian aid…’ (65: 327) | |
| | ‘…continuation of traditional DK [Denmark] course of action…’ (69: 334) | |
| | ‘Lastly, Powell had provided an array of examples of Iraq’s horrifying rap sheet om the area of human rights.’ (63: 306) | Human rights violations in Iraq |
| | ‘Rough climate…raises concerns regarding personnel, equipment, vehicles and logistical support. This will require getting used to.’ (58: 286) | Human rights of our soldiers |
| | ‘…at the end of the day, it is about our own safety…’ (71: 339) | Security of military personnel |
| | ‘The alternative to military action was worse.’ (71: 346) | What potential military action would entail |
| | ‘The American inquiry [regarding possible Danish participation in the operation] did not specify potentially removing the current regime…’ (60: 297) | Not human rights related |
| | ‘The international community must show our will to use military action…’ (58: 284) | |
| | ‘Thus I [Danish Minister of Foreign Affairs] have chosen to adjust the planned military contribution, so that it becomes less “harsh”, though still meaningful.’ (71: 339) | |
| | ‘Actions should have foundations in the UN’ (57: 283 and 61: 299) | Relying on the international community for support |
| | ‘Thus, we will support…the American and British course of action.’ (51: 258) | |
### Theme 3: historical analogies

**This has happened in the past; thus we can assume this will also happen in the current situation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Historical evidence of WMD production and use</th>
<th>Human rights related</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘Powell’s conclusion was unambiguous: Iraq has committed severe material breaches [in relation to their continued production of WMD], over the last 12 years.’ (63: 306)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Iraq has multiple times used WMD, also against civilian targets…over a long period of time.’ (69: 335)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Regarding Kosovo, the UN decided after the fact, through resolution 1244, that the operation to free Kosovo had been legitimate.’ (63: 310)</td>
<td>UN legitimising military actions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Previous resolutions [such as UNSC resolutions 678 and 687]…warrants the allies to use “all means necessary” to restore international peace and security in the area.’ (64: 316)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Iraq’s violations…has previously led to sanctions. This happened in 1993…’ (50: 255)</td>
<td>Iraq being uncooperative</td>
<td>Not human rights related</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘…these violations constitute a continuation of Iraqi obstruction of the work of the UNSCOM…’ (50: 256)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘In the light of the experiences of the last 12 years, it is not reasonable to expect cooperation from Iraq…’ (69: 335)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘This thought process [regarding arguments against potential forceful change of regime in Iraq] would imply that the USA should not have intervened in Europe in the 1940s…’ (60: 297)</td>
<td>Relating current situation to the events leading up to World War II</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘This [pressuring Iraq] would be a natural continuation of the political stance [of various Danish governments] regarding Iraq since the attack on Kuwait in 1990.’ (57: 282)</td>
<td>Previous decisions by Danish decision-makers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘…the Danish parliament previously approved of Danish participation in NATO’s military operations in Kosovo.’ (65: 325)</td>
<td>Legitimacy of previous decisions provides basis for legitimacy of the decision at hand</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘The current situation is almost identical to that of 1998. Then, the Danish parliament supported the government’s proposed plan military action (bill B 114). Iraq did then also not cooperate.’ (69: 334)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Theme 4: confirmation bias and the rejection of dissonance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th></th>
<th>Human rights related</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘Denmark, as a small state, has a natural interest in a strong international legal order…’ (60: 296)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predisposition to certain decision</td>
<td>‘…Denmark and the EU continue to hope that the conflict may be solved through peaceful means…’ (63: 307)</td>
<td>Relying on the international community for support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convinced of overwhelming support of that decision</td>
<td>‘…Denmark had agreed to participating in UN’s humanitarian actions in the event of war [decided before war was official/inevitable]’ (63: 311)</td>
<td>Strong tradition of providing humanitarian aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relying on this extensive support to legitimise one’s decision</td>
<td>‘The Danish preparations for humanitarian action are progressing.’ (65: 326)</td>
<td>Humanitarian action founded in international norms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘As a last resort…through military means…what is considered a threat against humanity, must be stopped.’ (68: 332)</td>
<td>Humanitarian action is not questioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘The government [of Denmark] is not alone with this position [that military force may be necessary].’ (50: 256)</td>
<td>Danish decision guided by international actors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘The government [of Denmark] still finds it important, that Denmark engages with the group of countries, currently applying political pressure on Iraq…’ (51: 259)</td>
<td>Danish decision supported externally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘This scenario is welcomed by Denmark, as it involves clear authorisation of military action from the UNSC.’ (65: 321)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘It is of no use, if a potential UNSC decision [regarding military action in Iraq] cannot be realised until months from now.’ (61: 300)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘…Denmark would let Germany control Danish foreign policy [in relation to UNSC decisions].’ (63: 309)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘…in the event of actions outside of the UN, it would be an entirely new situation…there is however, no reason to doubt that the USA would let the process remain grounded in UN framework…’ (60: 295)</td>
<td>Not human rights related</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘The government [Liberal/Conservative coalition] is building on the course of action, previously approved by a majority of parliament.’ (69: 335)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Operationalisation table
5.2 Analysis of the individual themes

5.2.1 Theme 1: categorise and stereotype

Theme 1 corresponds to the first of the four categories of common sources of misperceptions: categorising and stereotyping. In the decontextualisation stage of the process, the materials were read with the perspective of positive self-image versus the negative presumptions of our opponent, in mind. After extensive re-examination of the texts, a total of seven sub-categories were developed. Five sub-categories were coded as “Human rights related” and two were coded as “Not human rights related”.

5.2.1.1 Code: Human rights related

Relevant passages and quotes demonstrating a strong positive self-image were firstly identified. Numerous and lengthy passages related to the Danish contribution to “Peacekeeping” efforts and the promotion of “Peaceful solutions”, as well as descriptions of “Danish foreign policy visions”, were quickly underlined. Reading these passages whilst keeping in mind the activist theory perspective, opens for even deeper understanding. The language used is descriptive and informative, suggesting these statements are not up for debate, rather they should be taken as common knowledge. As previously discussed, Danish foreign policy is deeply rooted in the activist approach to military politics, made visible in these meaning units through a high level of confidence regarding Denmark being involved in wars “for the people” (Wivel, 2013: 300). In the context of the Liberal/Conservative coalition government in charge at the time the decision to participate with military forces in Iraq was made, the values of Danish military activism were framed as a defence against authoritarian forces and as a means of upholding peace and structure in the liberal world order.

Next step in the process was the identification of meaning units representing the Danish view of the opponent: Iraq. The meaning units focused on the Danish stereotypes regarding Iraq were divided into three sub-categories, one of which has two condensed meaning units. Most of the passages relevant for code “human rights related” under this theme, are in the sub-category of “WMD and the effect on the people – civilians and military personnel” and “Iraq being uncooperative”. Though connected to the small state argument of why Denmark would do anything to avoid disruption to the current international order (Wivel, 2013: 305), Iraq being uncooperative on the matters of WMD and the UN resolution 687, is further problematised as these poses not simply a political threat but a very real threat to the lives of millions of people. The situations described within this sub-category indirectly call for action if considered from
the just war theory perspective of prioritising the right to life of the individual above the rights of the state. In addition, as discussed under previous research, the ILC draft articles and certainly the necessity arguments, both legitimise humanitarian interventions in cases of “grave an imminent peril”, a description which certainly applies to this situation. The use statistics in several phrases across numerous documents analysed serve to not only inform the receiver(s) of the grave situation, but certainly also to emphasise the negative way in which Iraq is, or ought to be, viewed.

5.2.1.2 Code: Not human rights related

Under this theme, several passages where the self-image was expanded beyond Denmark’s borders were also identified. Keeping in line with the typical small state approach to matters of international concern and the traditionally strong military alliance between the USA and Denmark, the meaning units condensed to the sub-category of “American influence” under the “Not human rights related” code, are strong examples, of how new information that is inconsistent with the self-image – in this case not just of Denmark but of “our alliance” – is rejected. Take for example the first quote within that sub-category:

‘The Minister of Foreign Affairs [of Denmark] added that he was not familiar with any…remarks from the American administration regarding Hans Blix [UNSCOM inspector]. Perhaps however, negative articles could have been written about him in the USA. There is obviously freedom of speech in the USA.’ (Mariager and Wivel, 2019d, 60: 296).

Looking at this meaning unit objectively, the information provided suggests popular opinion of Hans Blix, and perhaps even opinions amongst American officials, may be rather negative. However, the Danish Minister of Foreign Affairs has worded his argument so as to not question the American stance in relation to the UNSCOM inspector. Finally, there is the end remark on freedom of speech, which frames potential negative remarks in an indisputably positive manner; once again, reaffirming the positive stereotypes of Denmark, its allies and their actions.

5.2.2 Theme 2: simplify causal inferences

The second theme, simplifying causal inferences, proved harder to initially identify in the texts. Unlike the first theme where it the texts can be read in a specific frame of mind at the decontextualisation and recontextualization stages, this theme is evident in a wide range of
contexts, resulting in especially meticulous reading. At the categorisation stage, seven sub-categories were developed, one of which had three condensed unit meanings and yet another with two. As was the case with theme 1, five sub-categories were coded as “Human rights related” and two were coded as “Not human rights related”.

5.2.2.1 Code: Human rights related

The biggest sub-category under this code is the sub-category of “Danish traditional course of action”, “Humanitarian aid” and “Humanitarian crisis”. The representative quotes selected for the operationalisation table are from several different documents, but all concern the Danish plans for humanitarian action. Bearing in mind the Danish approach to international peacekeeping as demonstrated by the activist theory, it is clear why this course of action is stressed. Interestingly however, whereas what a potential military involvement would entail was described in great detail, including estimated costs, humanitarian aid was not. As will be further analysed in section 5.2.4: Theme 4, the decision to provide humanitarian aid to combat the “imminent crisis”, had already been approved by Danish decision-makers. Nonetheless, even in documents dated earlier than those used for this analysis, which were scrutinized as part of the relevance sampling process, no substantial account of what constituted this “humanitarian crisis” or exactly Danish humanitarian action would consist of in response thereto. NGOs and humanitarian organisations of varying speciality were referenced and perhaps the answer to the question of what humanitarian action would mean and cost can be found within those correspondences – this was however outside the scope of this thesis. Based on the materials available, the meaning units representing the data concerned with humanitarian aid, consequently fit into this theme of simplifying causal inferences.

The remaining four categories coded as “Human rights related”, are all more specifically related to the physical human rights. “International community” and “Connections to terror organisations” are both based on the consequences of Iraq’s WMD. The relations between these two sub-categories and the theory it is based upon is discussed above in section 5.2.1.1. Even though the theoretical framework of just war and activist theory used to develop the sub-categories are the same as previously, the context under this theme is quite different. For example, the second quote of the theme is:

‘…it is the American view that there is cause for concern regarding Iraqi WMD falling into the hands of terror networks and that there is clear evidence of connections
between the Iraqi regime and Al-Qaida [terror organisation].’ (Mariager and Wivel, 2019d, 63: 306).

Here decision-makers build upon the already established positive image of America and the negative image of Iraq, by using them to simplify the discussion on possible terror connections; Iraq is the “bad guy” with big weapons they are not supposed to have, this alone justifies that no further explanation is needed for why the Americans, the “good guys”, would assume intentional cooperation from Iraq with terror organisations. On the other hand, the sub-category of the two condensed meaning units “Human rights of our soldiers” and “Security of military personnel” highlights the very real threat to human lives of soldiers of the invading force. The sub-categories obviously fit into the theoretical framework the same way as human rights violations caused by WMD: just war theory states that the right to life and the right to liberty are of highest priority. Even so, the passages selected for this theme continue to use simplified and generalised language. Rough climate is undesirable for both people and equipment; hence this is not elaborated upon as this would not serve the purpose of convincing a majority of decision-makers of approving of Danish military participation.

5.2.2.2 Code: Not human rights related

As was the case with the “Human rights related” code sub-categories, the phrases that belong under the “Not human rights related” code show a significant degree of simplified and generalising language. The PM theory category which specified this theme, describes how decision-makers have a strong tendency to oversell their own efforts and influence in relation to “good” or “positive” change. This is clearly demonstrated in the sub-category “What potential military action would entail”. The fourth quote of the sub-category describes how specifically the Danish Minister of Foreign Affairs (decision-maker) has “chosen” to re-evaluate and adjust to Danish military contributions, ‘…so that they become less “harsh”, though still meaningful’ (Mariager and Wivel, 2019d, 71: 339). Since Denmark is a democracy and war politics are accepted as serious situations requiring comprehensive investigations and there is a common practice established of only making decisions based on vast majorities in parliament, as noted under the activist foreign policy theory and demonstrated by Denmark’s previous actions, it seems safe to assume that the Minister of Foreign Affairs did not himself, singlehandedly, “choose” to adjust the planned military contributions. In addition, “less harsh” and “still meaningful” without any further context, has very little meaning, yet this exact phrasing sounds very convincing and impactful, hence making it an effective argument.
5.2.3 Theme 3: historical analogies

The theme of “historical analogies” handles arguments proposed in the decision-making process which are grounded in previous events. Finding meaning units that fall under this theme was relatively easy as they typically reference a year, making them stand out and easy to spot in large bodies of text, even in the early phases of decontextualising and recontextualising. Unlike the first two themes, theme 3 has more sub-categories coded as “Not human rights related” than those coded “Human rights related”, as the ratio as is three to two.

5.2.3.1 Code: Human rights related

Both meaning units under the sub-category “Historical evidence of WMD production and use” are closely related to the implications for human rights and the international order discussed in previous sections. Even so, the phrases under this theme strengthens the existing arguments by adding the power of “lessons learned”. The strength of this line of argument is further demonstrated in the sub-category of “UN legitimising military actions”. This can be seen if for example the first quote is put into Khong’s equation while applying the just war perspective of the UN as being the ultimate decision-maker regarding legitimacy of interventions (1992: 7): the military action taken in Kosovo (event A) was initiated without authorisation from the UNSC (characteristic X); the operations in Kosovo was legitimised by the UN after the fact (characteristic Y); the proposed multilateral coalition of military action (event B) would also be without authorisation from the UNSC (characteristic X); therefore, it is inferred that the military operations in Iraq could also be legitimised after the fact (characteristic Y). The equation could also be applied to this meaning unit whilst adapting a purely humanitarian perspective also described in the just war theory: the military action in Kosovo (event A) was initiated because of the grave and imminent threat to human lives (characteristic X); the operations in Kosovo was legitimised by the UN after the fact because of their preventive nature in relation to the clauses of responsibility to protect (characteristic Y); the proposed multilateral coalition of military action (event B) would also be based on grave and imminent threats to human lives, in particular because of threats from WMD (characteristic X); therefore, it is inferred that the military operations in Iraq could also be legitimised after the fact (characteristic Y).
5.2.3.2 Code: Not human rights related

The sub-category of “Iraq being uncooperative” has already been discussed in relation to the relevant theoretical framework in section 5.2.1.1, however in the context of the theme “historical analogies”, this sub-category is coded as “Not human rights related”, following the definitions thereof in the just war theory. The use of historical analogies to emphasise an argument and thereby making it hard to counter, is clearly shown by the meaning unit which implies that if the arguments against military action in the case of Iraq was accepted as being true and absolute, then America should not have intervened in Europe in the 1940s. It would seem safe to contend that any arguments which involve the atrocities committed in World War II, will certainly grasp the attention of the other party, whilst underlining the severity of the situation.

Throughout many of the documents, references are made to previous decisions of the Danish parliament. The data pool represented by the examples of meaning units presented in table 1, under the sub-category containing the condensed meaning units of “Previous decisions by Danish decision-makers” and “Legitimacy of previous decisions provides basis for legitimacy of the decision at hand”, is especially meaningful. The noteworthiness of this data pool, lies in the fact that the documents were produced under two different governments: the six earliest documents analysed (from 1998 – November, 2001) were produced under the Social-Democratic/Social-Liberal coalition government, under which bill B 114 was also approved; the seven latest documents were however, produced under the Liberal/Conservative coalition government (December, 2001 and onwards). The first document which references previous Danish decisions, is document 61 which happens to be the seventh document of the sampling group and thus falls under material produced under the second government. As Danish war politics has traditionally required a significant majority in parliament to be even considered, the many historical analogies to decisions made by parties which are now in opposition to the government, could definitely be interpreted as a deliberate strategy to gain parliamentary support – it is hard to argue against a proposition founded upon a decision you yourself has pushed through.

5.2.4 Theme 4: confirmation bias and the rejection of dissonance

Lastly, theme 4 proved in many instances, to be a combination of the previous three themes. Since confirmation bias and the rejection of dissonance can be seen at many levels, from the level of the individual to that of the state, decontextualising and separating these meaning units
from those of the other themes was quite difficult. Nevertheless, after accepting these close relationships it was possible to first categorise more general impressions of when predispositions seemed apparent and then take a step back and recontextualise. Within this theme, four sub-categories were established – two for each of the two codes.

5.2.4.1 Code: Human rights related
The arguments coded as “Human rights related” presented under this theme are strongly rooted in the legitimising and validating effects of outside support for decisions. The first sub-category labelled “Relying on the international community for support”, reiterated the importance of a small state to find support amongst other powerful states or a group of states. Calling attention to both the international legal order, as provided and maintained by the UN, and the closer to home community of states within the EU, Danish decision-makers express their confirmation bias by emphasising the priority given to peaceful conflict resolution across the board. The other half of this theme, rejection of dissonance, is evident in the second sub-category containing the condensed meaning units of “Strong tradition of providing humanitarian aid”, “Humanitarian action founded in international norms” and “Humanitarian action is not questioned”. If related to the theory of activist military politics, two distinct arguments arise: (1) Danish decision-makers are arguably predisposed to accepting humanitarian action, as not doing so would disrupt the existing trends in Danish foreign policy and subsequently be in disharmony with the positive self-image; and (2) small state politics is still evident, as even with the strong arguments of ‘traditions’, ‘visions’ and “good guys” imagery being used, action should still preferably be founded in international law and/or norms.

5.2.4.2 Code: Not human rights related
Finally, the two sub-categories coded as “Not human rights related” under theme 4: confirmation bias and the rejection of dissonance, are divided into “Danish decision guided by international actors” and “Danish decision supported externally”, and “Danish decision supported by majority internally”. Both sub-categories rely on previously discussed situations, such as the reliance upon strong international alliances by a small state such as Denmark and the painting of a positive self-image. As seen under theme 1: categorise and stereotype, creating a positive self-image is not necessarily always bound to the country itself but can be extended to whom we consider to be allies. Under this theme, these images serve to strengthen the confirmation bias in regard to, for example, the legitimacy of a potential multilateral coalition.
without UNSC authorisation – ‘[I]t is of no use, if a potential UNSC decision [regarding 
military action in Iraq] cannot be realised until months from now’ (Mariager and Wivel, 2019c, 
61: 300). The sub-category concerning internal support has also been partially discussed 
already, yet as with sub-category one, the analytic outcome of these meaning units also changes 
slightly with the application of this theme. When this argumentation was discussed under theme 
3: historical analogies, the purpose of the phrases seemed to be to persuade others to support 
one’s position. Under the application of theme 4, this purpose changes to one simply 
confirming what may be construed as “common knowledge” based on the wording thereof.

5.3 Quantification of the findings

Bengtsson suggests briefly quantifying one’s results, as to further emphasise the importance 
and role of each of themes used for the qualitative content analysis. This quantification will not 
be subjected to any additional analysis as it serves merely as an additional form of presenting 
the results first outlined in the operationalisation table in section 5.1 and then subjected to 
analytical scrutiny in section 5.2.

Through extensive examination of the 13 different documents sampled using the relevance 
sampling method, a total of 123 interesting passages and statements relevant to answering the 
research question were identified and highlighted. Those with particularly strong evidence 
were then presented in the operationalisation table. The total number of identified relevant 
passages under each theme is presented in table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Number of passages coded as “Human rights related”</th>
<th>Number of passages coded as “Not human rights related”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme 1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 2</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: quantification of results

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This thesis set out to critically assesses the decision-making process leading up to the 
acceptance of bill B 118 which approved Danish military action in the American-led
multilateral coalition ‘Operation Iraqi Freedom’. Initially, introductions into relevant themes and concepts were presented as a way of defining the scope of this thesis in relation to what is already out there. Concepts such as humanitarian warfare and tools used to analyse Danish foreign policy specifically, proved to be useful foundations to build upon by applying the theoretical framework. Three theories – just war theory, activist military politics theory and the PM theory – were described and subsequently applied in the context of the content analysis: firstly by sampling using the relevance sampling method through the perspectives of the three theories; secondly by categorising the meaning units into sub-categories and assigning them to particular codes; and lastly, the findings were related back to the original context of the theories and the wider global political sphere.

The nature of the investigation does not allow for absolute conclusions, the findings of the analysis in chapter 5 can at least be said to show some level of human rights justifications were indeed used by decision-makers, both as a tool of persuasion in the hunt for support and as a means to legitimise actions.

The majority of meaning units of theme 1: categorise and stereotype, were coded as “Human rights related” and the results of analysis thereof are twofold: (1) Danish pre-existing positive self-image as a strong voice for cause of humanitarian action propels decision-makers to keep up this tradition so as to not bring disharmony to the political scene, externally and internally; and (2) the wording of particular phrases often place human rights related arguments as a closing remark – this could arguably be seen as a deliberate attempt to leave human rights, the “just cause” in accordance with the just war theory, at the forefront of the receiving party’s mind.

For the second theme: simplify causal inferences, a significant majority of meaning units, 22 to 9, were coded “Human rights related”. What is most noticeable about the findings under this theme is their relevance in relation to the small state politics addressed by the activist theory. The activist theory suggests that Denmark shares traits with the expected behaviour of small states, yet there is also several areas, especially concerning human rights protection and peacekeeping, where Denmark falls outside that framework and proves the thesis of the country having an activist approach to military politics.

In theme 3: historical analogies, the ratio of “Human rights related” meaning units to “Not human rights related” units were 6 to 14. The most significant takeaway from the analysis of this theme was the result of the application of Khong’s equation. By comparing the situation of potential military action in Iraq to the indisputable case of World War II intervention and the redeemed after the fact intervention in Kosovo, decision-makers provided a practical
argument for why Denmark should join the coalition, in contrast to the more theoretical and ethical philosophical arguments evident under the previous themes.

As was concluded by the summarising theme 4: confirmation bias and the rejection of dissonance, there are several examples of how human rights were used in quite a few different ways to somehow influence the decision-making process. The answer to the research question of how human rights influenced the Danish decision-makers leading up to bill B 118 justifying Danish military involvement in Operation Iraqi Freedom, can therefore not be summarised into a simple answer. In manifest analysis such as this, the conclusion is best seen in the actual analysis of the material. Nonetheless, broadly stating that the findings support the initial thesis that human rights were indeed used, and arguably misused in certain contexts, during the decision-making process, seems justified.

6.1 Future research

As demonstrated throughout the analysis, several of the arguments in favour of Danish participation relied on the already accepted bill B 114. Examining the process leading up to this bill, could thus be an interesting area of future research, as the results of this could influence the findings within this thesis.

Staying on topic however, one could build upon this research by applying a theoretical framework appropriate for examining the “choice” situation – this would then include an analysis of bill B 114 itself. In addition, seeing as the Danish process was also highly influenced by others, the processes within other states and/or the international community as a whole leading up to a decision of whether to get involved or not, could also be a very interesting area for future research.
References


Bengtsson, M. 2016 ‘How to plan and perform a qualitative study using content analysis’ *Nurcing plus open*. 2: 8-14


